

## U.K. Adopts "Top-Up" Tuition Fees

British Universities prepare to compete in a more "American" system

By Jon Marcus

CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

THERE'S A HUSH over the courtyards of the ancient colleges along the River Cam. Even the tourists speak in whispers. It's examination week for the brainy young scholars who populate this famous university town. But it's something else, too: It's the calm before the storm.

Like every other university in England and Wales, Cambridge is about to undergo a vast change in the way it does business. It's the outcome of a political struggle so contentious it nearly brought down a government, resulting in a plan so laden down with compromises that almost no one seems to like it—including the universities that originally lobbied for it. And while the government insists that all of this will encourage more low-income students to

go on to higher education, its many critics expect precisely the opposite outcome.

What accounts for all this drama? Imagine the American system of costly and complex university financing and

*Raising taxes to pay for universities is considered politically unpalatable in a country where people hold mixed feelings toward higher education.*

heavy student debt imposed from scratch on a country where, until six years ago, tuition was completely free.

While the changes don't go into law until two years from this fall, there have already been far-reaching implications. In order to meet printing schedules, universities have to decide by around mid-December what they will charge in tuition. Admissions offices are being flooded with applications from students who otherwise might have taken a year off to travel but are scrambling to enroll before the new arrangement takes effect.

By one year from now, an estimated 100,000 additional students are expected to apply in a deluge that is already being called "the 2005 effect." One university division reported 900 applicants for 50 places, so many that the overwhelmed admissions officers admitted to having ultimately chosen the successful candidates at random.

This is one of several ways that, rather than solving problems, the government's controversial plan has made matters worse. The number of students in U.K.

universities has already nearly doubled from 567,000 to 1.1 million in the last 20 years—but funding per student has fallen

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DAVID LEVENSON, BLACK STAR FOR CROSSTALK

*Opposition to the Blair government's tuition plan was intense "because people have always had higher education for free," said MP Ian Gibson.*

## "Plain Living"

Berea College makes a commitment to the welfare of its students and its community

By Robert A. Jones

BEREA, KENTUCKY

THE LEAFY CAMPUS of Berea College, at the edge of Appalachia, has long been regarded as a place apart. It was founded, after all, by utopian visionaries who encouraged racial mixing in pre-Civil War Kentucky and, even today, Berea presents itself as the exception-

*At Berea, tuition is free for its 1,500 students, a generosity made possible by the college's stunning \$800 million endowment.*

to-the-rule in higher education, the debunker of academic myths, the reverser of trends.

Just how different is Berea? Plenty different.

Take, for example, the ominous trend in private college tuition, where the bill for a college education has been rising faster

than house prices in California. At Berea, tuition is free for its 1,500 students, a generosity made possible by the college's stunning \$800 million endowment.

Or consider the fact that private colleges increasingly have become enclaves of the well-to-do. Some

top private institutions now report median family incomes for entering freshmen in the range of \$150,000. A study by the Higher Education Research Institute found that, even at selective state universities, 40 percent of this year's freshmen come from families making more than \$100,000 per year.

At Berea, whose campus could be a movie set for an elite college, those demographics are nowhere to be found. In fact, Berea will not accept well-to-do students. It considers only students from the lowest



STEWART BOWMAN FOR CROSSTALK

*Sreirath Khieu, a Cambodian student known on campus as "Chan," makes early American brooms in her "labor position" at Berea College.*

economic strata, most of them from backward pockets of Appalachia. The average family income of incoming freshmen currently stands at \$28,000.

Or take the current willingness to coddle students with dormitory spas, massage therapists, and parking garages for their BMWs. Berea students would smile at those indulgences. If anyone is providing maid service at Berea, it's the students themselves. Each works ten to 15 hours a week in a "labor position" that ranges

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## In This Issue



TOM ROSTER, BLACK STAR FOR CROSSTALK

**P**RESIDENT Clinton Bristow, Jr. of Mississippi's Alcorn State University believes his school will benefit greatly from the state's desegregation settlement if appeals ever end and the money is allocated. (See page 9).

# Making a Difference

## "College Match" helps low-income students to compete on an equal footing

By Anne C. Roark

LOS ANGELES

**L**IKE MOST AMBITIOUS parents, Harley Frankel is determined to give his kids every advantage when they apply to college. Test-prep classes, writing tutors, campus tours, favors from influential friends—whatever might make a difference, he'll do his best to provide.

They are the best; they have a right to expect the best. That's what he tells them—and he means it.

The beneficiaries of this seemingly boundless devotion and determination are not Frankel's own children, who are already in college, but 41—soon to be 100—inner-city Los Angeles high school students who are participating in College Match, a program designed to get more low-income students into top colleges around the country.

Based on a simple formula—do for the poor what the rich do for their children—the fledgling program is focused on one of higher education's oldest and most intractable problems: income inequities on campus.

Except for stints in some top management posts in professional sports, Frankel has spent most of his professional life overseeing government programs to help economically disadvantaged students. In the early 1970s he was one of the original architects of the federal student financial aid policy that gave priority to low-income students and was a forerunner to Pell Grants, the nation's largest need-based grant program. He went on to be the Director of Head Start, and a senior executive for the Children's Defense Fund.

It wasn't until his own children began looking at college that he realized what was keeping economically disadvantaged students from getting into the country's top schools. Even when guaranteed financial aid, low-income students rarely compete on an equal footing simply because affluence itself plays a major role in the

outcome of college applications.

College-educated parents have been breeding college-bound children for generations. But, as Frankel discovered, affluent parents are now treating their offspring like spirited racehorses or show dogs who need to be trained and groomed to compete for top prizes in high-stakes competitions.

In contrast, low-income students go it alone, if they go at all. Their parents may be encouraging—or they may not—but parents who have not been to college themselves aren't likely to have many insider's tips. Public school counselors may have all the knowledge in the world, but with responsibility for upwards of 500 students each, they don't have time to share much of that knowledge. Little wonder then why so few poor students have aspirations beyond the parking lot of the nearest community college.

In fact, while racial inequality has been an issue widely discussed for decades on American college campuses, economic inequity has not. It is "higher education's dirty little secret," said Richard D. Kahlenberg, editor of "America's Untapped Resource: Low-Income Students in Higher Education."

Economically disadvantaged students are the largest underrepresented group on campus today, according to the Educational Testing Service. The better the college academically, the greater the imbalance economically. Only three percent of students in the nation's 146 most competitive colleges are from families in the lowest economic quartile, whereas 75 percent are from the upper quartile, according to a study by Anthony P. Carnevale, former ETS vice president for research.

As recently as six years ago, former presidents of Harvard and Princeton, strong supporters of racial equality, said it was unrealistic to expect elite colleges to admit more low-income students. "The problem is not that poor but qualified candidates go undiscovered, but that there are simply too few of these candidates in the



AXEL KOESTER FOR CROSSTALK

*Harley Frankel has organized a program to help able, but low-income, Los Angeles high school graduates compete with their wealthier peers for places in elite colleges.*

first place," wrote Derek Bok and William Bowen in "The Shape of the River," a book on race they co-authored in 1998.

This year, their successors took something of an about face. Calling the gap in opportunities for students from different economic backgrounds the "most severe domestic problem in the United States," Harvard President Lawrence Summers said it was "morally incumbent" on universities to take action. Harvard's first step has been to revamp its student-aid program so that parents who earn less than \$40,000 will no longer have to pay any college costs. Earlier, Princeton became the first university in the country to get rid of student loans by providing need-based grants large enough to cover all education costs.

Colleges and universities with smaller endowments can't be as generous, although, according to a 2003 College Board study, one reason college tuition has been rising so dramatically—twice as fast as inflation at private colleges and almost six times faster at public institutions—is that colleges are using some extra tuition money they get from affluent students to help more low-income students.

Frankel is concerned about all the low-income students who never make it to the door of a financial-aid office.

"I have a theory I'm trying to prove," Frankel said on his way to David Starr Jordan High School in Watts, a Los Angeles neighborhood better known for its drugs and drive-by shootings than for its college-prep programs.

"If qualified low-income students are given the same level of encouragement, strategic planning and insiders' knowledge that Westside (affluent and suburban) parents have given their children for generations, I am confident low-income students will get into college and do as well, if not

better, than those students who have been preparing themselves for college all of their lives," Frankel said.

Determined to prove his theory, Frankel set up an office in a spare bedroom in his house in Santa Monica, began seeking advice from local public school administrators and introducing himself to college admissions officers around the country. He managed to cobble together a budget to pay for tutors, trips to campuses as far away as Maine, and himself a modest salary so he could work full-time on the project.

Along the way, he got discount prices for test-prep courses from some of the pre-college training companies preferred by affluent families in Los Angeles. He

***Economically disadvantaged students are the largest underrepresented group on campus today.***

persuaded Edward B. Fiske, former education editor of the *New York Times*, to donate dozens of copies of his popular 700-page "Fiske Guide to Colleges." He lined up doctors and other professionals from disadvantaged backgrounds to talk about how they overcame economic and social barriers. In the back of his mind, Frankel also began to compile another list of professionals, Baby Boomers like himself who had had successful careers but were beginning to think about doing something else with the next phase of their lives—something meaningful.

Frankel then began looking for academically strong students from overcrowded,

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HARLEY FRANKEL

*Wellesley College was one of the stops in a tour of prestigious New England colleges a group of inner-city high school students took last winter.*



AXEL KOESTER FOR CROSSTALK

**Harley Frankel (far left) accompanies students on a visit to the prestigious California Institute of Technology.**

under-staffed public high schools in some of LA's toughest neighborhoods. To be admitted, students had to be interviewed and fill out a mini-version of a college application. The requirements are similar to college requirements: a rigorous course load, a ranking in the upper 15 percent of their classes, a potential for reasonably high SAT scores (and a willingness to work for them), a skill in music, athletics, drama, etc. (One criterion spelled out on the College Match application that students are unlikely to see on real college applications is a prohibition against gang affiliation.)

When he began interviewing students and having them fill out applications, Frankel knew he didn't want underachieving students who would be better served by remedial programs. He also knew he didn't want standout athletes and academic whiz kids: Harvard and Princeton and Stanford would be only too happy to take care of the inner-city superstars.

Instead, Frankel set his sites "just below that level," on the "hundreds, if not thousands, of well-qualified students who get lost in the process. They have good records, have the capability to become outstanding citizens, but are not recruited by the top colleges."

What's more, Frankel was certain there were "many excellent small colleges that would love for these students to apply and

enroll, but have no way of identifying and connecting with these prospective candidates."

College Match begins by providing low-income high school students with a pre-collegiate version of a reality TV makeover. Then College Match functions a bit like a dating service, but instead of fixing up couples, the aptly named program matches colleges and students.

In a world where programs for the disadvantaged come and go at the speed of cell phone models, College Match has been met with considerable enthusiasm as it nears its third year of operation.

"I've worked with hundreds of programs that try to help disadvantaged students, and they all provide some help, but a couple of things make College Match stand out," said Erbe Mitchell, an admissions officer at Bowdoin College. "Harley has exceptional working knowledge of higher education and student aid.

He's not a rookie trying to go out and do social justice in higher education."

Some volunteers from nonprofit organizations who go to inner-city schools to try to help are what Antonio Reveles, director of college counseling at Bell High School, calls "poverty pimps... people who are more interested in using economically disadvantaged students as statistics than in giving them the kind of help they really need."

One of the keys to the success of College Match, Reveles and Mitchell agree, is

**Harley Frankel grew up poor, the grandson of Jewish immigrants, so he identifies with the students he is trying to help.**

Frankel's determination to send students only to colleges where he has personal relationships.

"Harley doesn't send students to institutions; he sends them to people," Mitchell said. "Say one of his students comes here and it turns out she's under a lot of stress because she's struggling to send \$30 or \$40 home every week to help

her family. Harley wants to be able to get on the phone and call me or someone else he knows and trusts and say point blank, 'This kid's in trouble. You've got to get the college to give her some more support.' Having that kind of relationship is the difference between a student making it or not."

Julie Neilson, Jordan High's director of college counseling, is amazed that a man of Frankel's stature would work so closely with students himself.

"Since Jordan sits in the middle of Watts, an area that is and has been plagued with riots, poverty, drugs and gangs, we seldom have an adult who is willing to come directly to our school and work directly with our students and parents," Neilson said in a letter to Frankel. "Organizations that come to work within our school send college students but never do the actual hands-on work themselves. This may appear to be a minor point to some, but to our community it is not.... A new attitude is beginning in this neighborhood, and you have had a great part in this."

Stephen Singer, a private school counselor in New York is part of a lineup of leading educators from around the country who are on the board of College Match. "What Harley is doing is much more important than what I'm doing," Singer insists.

Singer is director of college counseling at Horace Mann School, a competitive prep school where students feel their lives are over if they don't get into a name-brand college. "Privileged students in an elite school fight to get into Ivy League schools. My job is to help them with their strategy," he said. "The difference between an Ivy League school and a really good college may or may not be important. But what Harley is doing is important. He's changing people's lives entirely."

Benjamin Sanchez sees himself as one of those people. Riding the bus back from a College Match tour of Occidental College, a well-regarded liberal arts school in Los Angeles, the Bell senior reflected on "where I was headed before I met Mr. Frankel."

Sanchez had been a good student and liked difficult subjects, math and science especially. He was a runner and liked hard races; cross country was his specialty. But "something changed" when he reached

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## NEWS FROM THE CENTER

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education will release "Measuring Up 2004: the Nation's Report Card for Higher Education" on September 15 at an invitational symposium at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

A recent "Policy Alert" issued by the National Center urges states to adopt policies that will make it easier for students to transfer from two-year to four-year colleges and universities. A study by Jane V. Wellman, senior associate with the Institute for Higher Education Policy, found that ineffective state policies often act as a barrier to students from two-year colleges who are seeking a baccalaureate degree. Wellman makes several recommendations that could increase the effectiveness of state transfer policies.

Another recent "Policy Alert" stressed the need for states to adopt policies that would make it easier for students to move through the "educational pipeline," from ninth grade through high school graduation to a four-year degree. "Increasing the number of college graduates is more than an educational issue; it is also a key social issue," the report says. "Residents holding college degrees are the basis of a state's 'educational capital.'" The report includes data for each state showing students graduating from high school; entering college; returning to college for the sophomore year; and graduating with an associate or bachelor's degree.

These summaries of reports on important issues in postsecondary education are available at [www.highereducation.org](http://www.highereducation.org). ♦

**from preceding page**

high school. He had “seen things”—drugs and gangs—and he had “stopped seeing the point” of school.

Frankel refocused his thinking and got him running again, faster than ever, and in more ways than one. Sanchez realized there was a point to school after all. It would get him into college. And college would get him—well, almost anywhere. Now his grades are strong. His SAT scores are up 150 points. And he’s even making suggestions about colleges to approach. “I heard this place in Pasadena—Caltech—was pretty good in science. Do you think we should go there?”

Many College Match students are reticent to talk about their backgrounds, which is ironic since their backgrounds are part of what makes them appealing to colleges. “I’d rather not get into that,” one young student replied curtly to a question about what her parents do for a living. Other students whose parents are assembly-line workers and housekeepers adopt euphemisms, saying their parents are in “maintenance” or “health promotion.”

On a winter morning during the last school year, Frankel gathered the parents of 24 students who were getting ready to fly to the East Coast for an eight-day college tour. Amazed by how many were going on the trip—he had budgeted for only 15—he thanked the parents for entrusting their children to his care. Because many of the parents don’t speak English, his words were translated by a student and a teacher.

He told the parents that their children would fly from Long Beach to Boston where two vans would be waiting to drive them around New England. He acknowledged that most of them probably hadn’t heard of the colleges their children would be visiting. Harvard, probably. But Tufts, Trinity, Wheaton, Wesleyan? “Many of these are just below the Ivy League. They’re wonderful institutions,” he assured them.

It might be cold, he warned. There could even be snow, but under no circumstances were they to go out and buy new clothes. “We’ll put on layers; we’ll make do.”

Reveles, who was one of several counselors accompanying Frankel on the trip, reminded the students to ask questions and take notes. “You are research scientists—anthropologists visiting strange new places, meeting people you’ve never met before.... You will meet people who are expected to go there. You’ll see people with their family names on the buildings,” he warned.

But they were also to have fun, Frankel insisted.

“This is going to be one of the best trips ever,” Frankel said. He mentioned the names of two of LA’s most elite prep schools, and added, “This will be better than their trips, and theirs cost \$2,000 apiece. You will be going free. We’ve done it because you’re very special young people. You deserve it. You’ve earned it. You’re the best. You deserve the best.”

After they returned from the trip, Reveles realized how profoundly the students’ lives were changing just by being in the program. “They’ve seen some of the

best educational institutions in the country. And not only have they seen them, they’ve begun to imagine themselves being in those places. They’ve begun to believe they belong.”

Josefina Bojorquez, a student from Franklin High School, where most of the students are from immigrant families, said she “loved Harvard” but much to her surprise also fell in love with Connecticut College, Wellesley, Mount Holyoke—all women’s colleges or former women’s colleges she had never heard of. “They talked about women and empowerment. I loved that. I could see myself there.”

To thank Frankel for the trip, the students pooled what little money they had and bought a handsome pen. The thank-you notes that accompanied the gift seem to overwhelm Frankel every time he looks at them.

“I’m going to get these preserved permanently,” he said, eager to show off the notes at lunch but concerned something might happen to them in the meantime. “Are your hands clean? Are you sure your hands are clean? Check.”

“Seeing all these great colleges has motivated me to work even harder,” one student wrote. “You have changed my life for the better.”

“Dearest Mr. Eversosweet Frankel,” another student wrote. “I would like you to know that your [sic] one of the reasons I can’t stop thanking God every day.”

Frankel has a soft side for students but he is also a tough businessman when trying to sell the program to donors. With an undergraduate degree from Columbia and an MBA from Harvard, he can’t help but talk about college in economic terms.

The math is simple. College Match spends about \$2,500 per student. Each student who goes to college should receive about \$100,000 in financial assistance over four years. A donor who puts in \$25,000 will generate \$1 million in assistance; a contribution of \$50,000 will produce \$2 million. That is a 4,000 percent return on investment—“quite a nice number,” as Frankel sees it.

For students it’s not a bad investment of their time and effort, either, considering

**The vast majority—86 percent—of African American students at elite colleges are from middle- or upper-middle-class backgrounds.**

that a person with a college degree can expect to earn \$1 million more over a lifetime than someone with only a high school diploma. And that’s not to mention all the indirect benefits: being more mobile; living in better, safer neighborhoods; living longer, healthier lives.

What’s more, college does not just improve individual lives; the nation as a whole benefits. The more people who have college degrees, the more tax revenues go up, unemployment rates go

down, reliance on public assistance programs diminishes, and participation in civic activities increases.

It may be a good investment for the country, but it certainly has not been a lucrative proposition for Frankel himself. After Head Start and the Children’s Defense Fund, but before he created College Match, he was a founding executive of Major League Soccer and an executive vice president for both the Los Angeles Clippers and the Portland Trail Blazers.

Why would someone with so much apparent business acumen willingly take what he says was a 300 percent drop in salary to help a handful of disadvantaged kids? Frankel grew up poor, the grandson of Jewish immigrants, so he identifies with the students he is trying to help.

“He’s always been Mr. Macro. He’s helped thousands of kids. But they’ve been faceless,” said Frankel’s wife Wendy Lazarus, who is co-founder and co-president of a policy and strategy center for children. “Getting to actually sit down with these kids and work with them has been wonderful for him—I’ve never seen him happier. It’s also important for these kids to get to see what a competent, hard-working adult who is focused can accomplish.”

Frankel might just work himself back into another macro-management position if College Match proves successful and is expanded into a nationwide program. But there could be pitfalls.

The more successful College Match is, the more it may also become susceptible to attack from an unlikely opponent: supporters of race-based affirmative action. College Match hasn’t gotten caught up in the race-income debate yet, for the simple reason that all its students so far are both low-income and members of racial minority groups, but that debate could heat up anytime.

Race and income have always been linked in this country, yet programs that focus on race do not necessarily help low-income populations and vice versa. Bok and Bowen found that in the 28 highly selective colleges they studied, race-based affirmative action did not draw in many low-income students. The vast majority—86 percent—of African American students at elite colleges are from middle- or upper-middle-class backgrounds.

In simulated comparisons involving the 146 competitive colleges Carnevale studied, minority enrollment would be four percent in a strict merit-based system. It would grow to 12 percent under race-sensitive admissions policies, and drop back to ten percent under income-based policies. While about three percent of students in competitive colleges are in the lowest income quartile, and ten percent are in the lower half of the economic pool, the proportion of low-income students could jump to 38 percent if income were to be taken into consideration the way race has been.

Considering the constitutionality of affirmative action, in June 2003 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a case involving the University of Michigan that race-conscious policies were still needed to overcome the effects of past discrimination but



AXEL KOESTER FOR CROSSTALK

**Benjamin Sanchez credits “College Match” for helping him improve his grades, his SAT scores and his outlook on life.**

that such policies cannot be continued indefinitely. If public opinion were to determine admissions policies today, race-based affirmative action would already be on its way out. More than two thirds of Americans polled by *Newsweek* in 2003 opposed race-based affirmative action while a similarly large portion of the population supported policies that give special consideration to low-income students.

Whatever the outcome of that issue, College Match could also run afoul of another national debate: How much tax money should go to help the poor? Frankel repeatedly tells his students not to worry about financial aid because he is sanguine that he can get his students into good colleges. But the reality is that federal student aid has been falling far short of demand for years. While Frankel may be savvy enough get the support his students need, not all students are so lucky.

And that brings up the most important reason why Frankel’s biggest fans are skeptical about the likelihood that College Match can be replicated elsewhere.

“What makes the program work is Harley,” Reveles said. Where can you find another Harley—let alone a whole cadre of them?

But Frankel is convinced that there are plenty of aging Baby Boomers all over the country just waiting to get involved. Indeed, he already has three professionals lined up—one is a lawyer, another is a retired Latino public official, and the third is a recently retired head of a successful television production company. Before long, as Lazarus points out, there will be alumni who will want to come back, too.

Benjamin Sanchez has already thought of that. “What I want to do when I grow up is be like Mr. Frankel,” he said. “I want to make a difference in the world.” ♦

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## BEREA

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from janitorial work to producing videotapes. And campus parking is a breeze because most students can't have cars.

But the crux of the difference between Berea and many other private colleges is not the demographics or free tuition. Rather, it is the presence of a collective

**Unlike other colleges, Berea uses its endowment largely to provide free tuition.**

idea about the mission of the college, which is to transform the lives of poor but gifted students from Appalachia and then return them, as graduates, to their communities so they can improve the lives of others.

"We're educating our students to be engaged in a different vocational life and world than does a Stanford or a Swarthmore," said President Larry Shinn. "Being a CEO of a major corporation is not really what we're about, although some of our students do that. The idea is for our graduates to leave Berea and be engaged in a life of service to their communities, to give something back."

It sounds too sappy to be true: a private college in a bucolic setting that gives away ninety-thousand-dollar educations to poor kids, and so inspires those kids with a sense of mission that they return and rebuild their broke-down communities.

But talk to students and teachers here, and they all seem infused with that sense of commitment. "Most of us here wouldn't get the chance to go to college without

Berea," said Jami Garth, a junior from Monticello, Kentucky, who plans to take up family counseling when she graduates. "We all have something in common here, which is low income. We realize we are being given this great opportunity and, frankly, we don't want to blow it."

A few doors down, Academic Provost Dave Porter said, "I like to think of Berea as offering absolutely the best liberal arts education that money can't buy. This institution is a trust for the people of the region. When you come here, you just get caught up in the whole idea of the place."

And the numbers suggest that Berea, by and large, succeeds in its goal of supplying Appalachia with new generations of leaders. More than half of Berea students go on to graduate school, but eventually about 58 percent enter public service or non-profit careers, most of them in the Appalachian region. Recent Berea graduates have taken up projects ranging from food co-ops and environmental restoration to small-business counseling.

Take a walk around the Berea campus, and initially you will not sense any difference from a dozen other small, private colleges in the East. Students stroll down tree-lined walkways to academic buildings that harken back to the 19th century. Students loll on the manicured lawns, their laptops glowing.

But keep looking, and the differences start to emerge. In one corner of the campus sits a nondescript building with a sign that simply says, "Broomcraft." The sign on another building, close by, says, "Wrought Iron."

It's probably safe to say that no building at Swarthmore is labeled, "Broomcraft." That's because Swarthmore students don't make brooms. But Berea students do just that. Inside the Broomcraft building is a small factory where students learn how to craft a fine artisan broom from the best materials.

Sreirath Khieu, an international student from Cambodia who goes by the nickname "Chan" on campus, sat at one of the workplace benches, surrounded by sheaves of golden broomcorn. The fifth of seven children in Cambodia, she is the first person in her family to come to America or go to college. She seems to sense the irony of a newly-arrived Cambodian turning out brooms that will be sold in nearby shops as replicas of American folkcraft. But she also loves it.

"In Cambodia, making brooms is kind of a low-class job, and I was surprised when they told me my labor position would be in broomcraft," she said. "I found out that making good brooms is really hard."

Khieu pauses and then comes to a Zen-like conclusion. "We are not only learning how to make brooms here," she said. "We are learning what a person needs, inside, to be a good broom maker." But the work program is only part

of Berea's unusual approach to higher education. The college has no fraternities or sororities and requires students to live on-campus throughout their undergraduate careers. No alcohol is allowed on or off campus (Berea is in a dry county), and smoking is severely restricted. There is no football team, no funky college town next to the campus, and the car prohibition extends to all students except seniors.

It's enough to cramp the style of any 19-year-old. "The truth is, you have to work at finding entertainment here," said Andrew Hartl, a junior from Malta, Ohio. "Sometimes I think of it as the Berea bubble, a protected world that has its own rules. You either live with the rules and make peace with them, or you struggle. I would guess about 80 percent of the kids make peace with it, and 20 percent struggle."

Gail Wofford, vice president for labor and student life, agrees that some of the restrictions can be tough. But the rules do not flow from a mistrust of the students, she said. Rather, they are directed at maintaining the college's strong sense of community.

"We're saying to the students, 'You're going to be with us for four years. In that period, you can't get away from us by living off campus or driving away in your car. You must stay interested in what Berea has to offer. You must live and learn together like a family, and, if you do that, you will benefit. You will become a better person,'" she said.

When Wofford mentions family, she is referring to the remarkably diverse population of white, black and foreign students that now fills the campus. Even though Berea was founded on Christian principles back in 1855, its attitude has always been inclusive of different races and religious

**"Sometimes I think of it as the Berea bubble, a protected world that has its own rules."**

— BEREA STUDENT  
ANDREW HARTL

backgrounds. At present 17 percent of students are African American and eight percent are international students.

Much of this heritage stems from Berea's 150-year history. When the founders arrived at their mountain-ridge site 35 miles south of Lexington in 1855, they first created the town of Berea with the college following a few years later. And it was no mere town but a controversial utopian community that extended equal rights to all women and men, including African Americans. Within the community, blacks and whites were required to live next door to each other in a checkerboard pattern.



PHOTOS BY STEWART BOWMAN FOR CROSSTALK

**Berea undergraduates must live on campus, in quarters like "Ecoville," all four years. Only seniors can have cars.**

Not surprisingly, these ideals did not sit well in the southern Kentucky culture of the time. The community was attacked and driven away by pro-slavery thugs during the Civil War but returned in the following years and established the college expressly for "freedmen," or former slaves, and the mountain populations of Appalachia.

During those early years the college leaders also developed eight principles, known as the "Great Commitments," that continue to guide the college's policies today. These principles are the source of the work program and the four-year residential policy as well as the more general approach to college life that the Great Commitments describe as "plain living."

In spite of its spare lifestyle, this approach has proven remarkably resilient and successful. Berea's retention and graduation rates remain high, especially for a college where the students are uniformly poor and must withstand the consequent economic pressures. At present, 80 percent of Berea's first-year students return for their sophomore year, and 65 percent graduate within five years. Moreover, about 55 percent of its graduates earn advanced degrees.

And the college continues to attract high-level applicants. This fall's incoming class has an average ACT score of 23 and 1,100 on the SATs. Sixty percent of entering freshmen ranked in the top 20 percent of their high school class, and the average grade point average of all first-year students is a "recalculated" 3.4—a figure used by Berea that excludes all non-academic courses. Pure GPAs were approximately 3.8.

Berea has also fared well in the world of college rankings. *U.S. News & World Report* rated Berea the best comprehensive college in the South in 2003, the

**continued next page**



**Most Berea students accept the strict campus rules, but about "20 percent struggle" with them, says junior Andrew Hartl.**

*from preceding page*

eightth time the college was so rated. In these rankings, Berea generally has been applauded for the quality of its undergraduate teaching and its commitment to the welfare of its students.

Behind this success lies the weight of the college's \$800 million endowment and an improbable financial machine. Over

***Berea College will accept only students from the lowest economic strata, most of them from backward pockets of Appalachia.***

the past two decades, Berea has emerged as one of the premier fundraising institutions in higher education. The size of its endowment puts it far ahead of many larger institutions, and the college currently is concluding a \$150 million campaign to augment the fund.

In addition, the college separately raises \$4 million a year to provide additional funds for ongoing operations. This stellar performance has been the hallmark of the presidency of Shinn, a former religion scholar who now travels almost half the year on fundraising forays throughout the nation. During Shinn's presidency, which began in 1994, the endowment has grown by nearly half a billion dollars.

The growing wealth has allowed Berea to add new programs, increase salaries, and renovate some of the college's 19th-century buildings with advanced electronics and maintenance systems. In addition, the college now equips its incoming students with laptop computers.

"Berea has had a remarkable recent history," said a former higher education official in Kentucky who asked not to be identified. "The college has always been identified with the poor, but the fact is that Berea is not a poor institution anymore. They have joined the haves and departed from the have-nots."

Shinn and other college officials acknowledge their success, but they rigorously dispute the notion that Berea has arrived at fat city. First and foremost, they argue that Berea's endowment—as opposed to those of other colleges—is used largely to pay for the free tuition program.



***A student works in the college garden. Berea students pay no tuition but work ten to 15 hours a week in "labor positions."***

"We refer to the endowment as the tuition fund, and that's what it is," said Shinn. "When other colleges charge tuition, they can use their endowment income to hire new faculty, to construct new buildings, or whatever else. We cannot. The great majority of our endowment income goes back to the students, and that single element makes our financial condition very different from most other colleges."

This year, Berea will spend about \$22,000 for each student at the college. As a comparison, Shinn notes that colleges such as Bowdoin or Swarthmore spend between \$45,000 and \$65,000 per student per year while charging approximately \$35,000 for tuition.

"The free tuition program means that we can't spend as much as these other colleges," he said. "It means that our salaries are not as high as some others, that our faculty members teach more classes. People always ask, 'Why not charge tuition and then you can have what these other colleges have?' The answer is simple. We have a passion about serving these bright, capable students who otherwise could not afford a quality education. If we charged tuition, Berea would no longer be Berea."

The policy of admitting only low-income students (this year the maximum allowable income for a family of three is \$47,000, and the college trustees are considering a proposal to lower it still further), and encouraging students into a life of public service rather than, say, investment banking, has created other financial obstacles for the college. Namely, it has eliminated the class of wealthy alumni that constitutes the primary source of donations for most colleges.

What's worse, if a Berea alum does become wealthy, or even comfortably middle-class, his or her children cannot attend Berea. The family's income will make them ineligible.

"Let's say the circumstances force us to be creative," said Ron Smith, vice president for finance. "We raise money from people we call 'friends of Berea,' people who are not alumni but relate to the story of Berea. We find that many people will connect with the mission of the college, and we look for those people constantly."

The creative fundraising has led Berea to employ some unorthodox methods, at least for a college. Direct mail is used frequently. The college purchases lists of likely supporters and also develops lists of its own. Next to the campus, for example, the college operates a number of retail craft stores and even a hotel—the Boone Tavern Hotel, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places—and regularly harvests names and addresses of customers at those establishments.

Smith tells the story of a mysterious \$7 million bequest that came to the college from the estate of a couple from Iowa. No one could



***Berea College "is a trust for people of the region," says Academic Provost Dave Porter. "When you come here, you just get caught up in the whole idea of the place."***

figure out why. Eventually, college officials discovered that the couple had stayed at the Boone Tavern Hotel several years earlier. It was the only connection they ever found between the couple and the college.

Bill Laramee, vice president for alumni and college relations, said Berea almost certainly will succeed in reaching its most recent \$150 million fundraising goal. "In this campaign, the largest gift was \$1.5 million," he said. "We're told there is no way we should raise \$150 million with only one gift of \$1.5 million, but we will do it. We do it by collecting many, many smaller donations."

Smith offers one more reason for the impressive size of Berea's endowment. "It comes from discipline," he said. "When we raise money for the endowment, it

***"We have a passion about serving these bright, capable students who otherwise could not afford a quality education."***

**—LARRY SHINN  
PRESIDENT OF BEREA COLLEGE**

stays in the endowment. We don't spend it on a nice new building or something like that. We invest the money and use the income to provide a quality education."

As for the future, Berea is likely to remain much the same as today, except more so. On the wall of virtually every administrator's office at the college hangs a framed copy of the Great Commitments. At Berea these commitments are studied, like the Torah in a synagogue, for guidance in all decisions.

For example, some administrators expressed concerns in recent years that the college's commitment to African American students had slipped below the level implied in the Great Commitments. Extensive discussions ensued, and a decision was made to rectify the situation. This fall the percentage of African Americans in the freshman class will be double that of

previous years—about 25 percent.

Joe Bagnoli, associate provost for enrollment management, noted that the African American population in Appalachia amounts to only three percent. "So our student population already had a higher percentage of African Americans than the region we serve," he said. "But that wasn't the point. The college had made an early commitment to an interracial community on campus, and we felt we had strayed somewhat from that principle. So now we are returning to it."

Otherwise, Berea likely will retain its timeless quality. This is not a campus



***During President Larry Shinn's tenure, the Berea College endowment has grown by nearly half a billion dollars.***

where parking garages and bio-labs pop up overnight. The outside world of sharp elbows and upscale striving hardly seems to intrude, and most here seem to like it that way.

"I want it to stay just the way it is," said Jami Garth, the junior. "Most of us are from small towns, not the big city, and Berea is the kind of place we need. When I graduate, I will think of Berea still being here, helping other kids the way it helped me." ♦

***Robert A. Jones, a Los Angeles freelance writer, is a former reporter and columnist for the Los Angeles Times.***

# "More Better Faster"

## Oregon's newly appointed Board of Higher Education grapples with a legacy of disinvestment

By Pamela Burdman

ASHLAND, OREGON

IT WAS THE REGULAR meeting of Oregon's State Board of Higher Education, but other than the poor lighting in the room and the PowerPoint presentations, the circumstances were anything but regular.

Richard Jarvis, chancellor of the seven-campus Oregon University System, was noticeably absent. Occupying his seat was Jon Yunker, the state's former budget director. To Yunker's left in the board chair's seat was a new face—not the man who had been appointed early in the year to lead the system into a brighter future, not even another crony of the governor. In a highly unusual occurrence, the man gaveling the meeting was the governor.

Welcome to the latest episode of "Reinventing Higher Education," by Governor Ted Kulongoski, a Democrat. Kulongoski set higher education as his number one priority, with the energy and direction to come from his hand-picked board president, former governor Neil Goldschmidt. As engineer of the "Oregon Comeback," Goldschmidt had an unrivaled reputation in the state as a change agent. But a month before the board meeting, he shocked the Oregon public when he resigned, admitting to having had repeated sexual relations with a 14-year-old Portland neighbor during the 1970s.

The departure of the ex-governor, a commanding presence in Oregon politics for 30 years, left many wondering whether Kulongoski's initiatives could thrive without a powerful champion—and worrying that the power vacuum would equal a free hand for campus presidents. Caught flat-footed, Kulongoski appointed himself acting board president, a non-voting role. A sign of the imperiled status of his higher education agenda, the stopgap move was, at the same time, a testament to his commitment.

"We've gotten this belief that postsec-

ondary education is a luxury, that it isn't something the state has to do," Kulongoski told the board. "That has to change. I don't think there's anything more important. This has to be a long-term investment in Oregon's future in ten, 15, 20 years. Our stable economy and quality of life is dependent on our institutions of higher education."

The governor and his newly appointed board made it clear that their plans would not be extinguished by controversy or false starts. The announcement that former OUS official George Pernsteiner would become executive vice chancellor—a post temporarily filled by Yunker—elicited outright jubilation. But the buoyant mood seemed incongruous to anyone familiar with the magnitude of problems confronting the system.

Beneath the optimism was a realization that the board had barely begun to tackle a legacy of disinvestment. Four years ago, the state was paying 51 percent of instructional costs at the four-year public universities. By last year, that share had fallen to 36 percent. And with the failure in February of Measure 30, a ballot referendum on a tax package passed by the state legislature, the system was forced to shave an additional \$7.5 million of the \$347 million originally appropriated for the biennium. The system's overall budget for the period, including tuition revenue, federal grants and other income sources, is \$2.3 billion.

"Higher education actually took, on a percentage basis, the worst hits of all the state agencies," said University of Oregon provost John Moseley. "The state investment per student has gone down by around 30 percent, and tuition has gone up by around 30 percent."

To change that arithmetic, Goldschmidt had set a feverish pace. A series of new working groups were convening once or twice a month. The motto of one group that was focused on streamlining K-16, and chaired by Chemeketa Community College president Gretchen Schuette,

seemed to set the tempo: "More Better Faster."

"I'm getting killed this year," noted Peter Gilkey, a University of Oregon mathematician who represents the system's faculty. "I signed up for five weekend meetings and nine board meetings for the year. [Now] I'm attending one or two meetings a week."

On a few occasions, the speed caused the board to miss legal deadlines for public notice, acknowledged system spokeswoman Diane Saunders.

Keeping the board busy are activities like scouring financial reports to cut costs, strategizing about ways to support the state's economic growth, and developing a plan to keep a college education within reach of all students. Kulongoski made college affordability a hallmark of his tenure by championing the formation of a constitutionally protected endowment to fund student financial aid.

"I have a vested interest in this idea," said Kulongoski. "Government traditionally never looks long-term. It's driven by the tenure of those who are in office. I have a concern that we're reverting back to the way we were before World War II, that higher education is becoming a benefit for those of wealth."

In fact, Kulongoski's only testimony during the last legislative session was to plug an earlier version of the proposal, called the Access Scholarships for Education Trust, or ASET. The bill got nowhere, however, because the \$2.5 billion required to generate sufficient income seemed a quixotic goal, and because it stirred up a conflict over whether state dollars should fund financial aid for Oregon students at private and religious institutions. But he gets credit for highlighting Oregon's affordability problem, said John Wykoff, executive director of the Oregon Student Assistance Commission. "The governor's greatly elevated financial aid as an issue," he said.

Late last year, Kulongoski embarked on the current gambit, a broader reform, by asking most of the board members to resign. Besides Goldschmidt and Schuette, prominent replacements included Nike Chief Financial Officer Don Blair, former Intel Capital vice president Kirby Dyess, and Oregon AFL-CIO chief Timothy Nesbitt. The governor also reappointed Geri Richmond, a nationally known chemist from the University of Oregon. The board's veteran member, Richmond agreed to become vice president.

The spark was to come from Goldschmidt, a larger-than-life figure, former Portland mayor and U.S. transportation secretary. Yet, even had he remained, the



Former Oregon Budget Director Jon Yunker served as executive vice chancellor of the Oregon University System from April to July.

PHOTOS BY STEVE JOHNSON, BLACK STAR, FOR CROSSTALK

plan for translating the new vision, new players, and new energy into the new money necessary to realize new initiatives was never clear.

"The elephant in the room is that there is no money," said Ryan Deckert, a Senate Democrat from Beaverton and a University of Oregon graduate.

With an eye at least to improving higher education's share of "no money," a top board priority has been reorganizing the Chancellor's Office, long a target both of distrust from state lawmakers and resentment from campuses.

**Welcome to the latest episode of "Reinventing Higher Education," by Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski.**

In the absence of a coordinating body, the state allots separate budgets to the seven four-year universities, the 17 community colleges, and the Oregon Student Assistance Commission.

"Working with higher education was like working with a neighbor over a tall fence," recalled Yunker. "You'd hand over money, and the next thing you'd hear was, 'That's not quite enough.'" Yunker filled in as executive vice chancellor from April until Pernsteiner's arrival in July.

If legislators grouse about lack of accountability, campuses, especially the flagship University of Oregon, historically

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Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski believes the state's economy and quality of life depend on an affordable, accessible higher education system.

**from preceding page**

weren't much fonder of the centralized authority. "I used to call it the last bastion of communism," quipped Moseley.

The 2002 hiring of Richard Jarvis, against the presidents' recommendation, caused a "disjunction" according to Moseley. "The former board was moving increasingly toward more autonomy for the institutions, and inadvertently they

**Oregon's State Board of Higher Education is seeking the comfort zone between micro-managing and rubber stamping.**

hired a person who did not buy into that vision," he said. Former board member Roger Bassett countered that the ex-chancellor was moving toward decentralization, but more slowly than campuses wished.

More than anything, however, what doomed Jarvis' tenure, was a poor 2003-05 higher education budget. The new board was confirmed last January, and two months later Jarvis resigned, with a \$250,000 separation package. Though he remained chancellor through June 30, he was not working at the chancellor's office, attending board meetings, or returning phone calls from *National CrossTalk*.

The board has begun paring back other functions of the chancellor's office, retooling it to focus on policy, advocacy, financial systems and board support. Most academic affairs staff left at the end of June, their duties transferred to campuses, for a savings of \$1 million. A Council of Provosts is to make academic policy recommendations to the board.

Plans to eliminate other jobs—primarily in general administration, information technology and a technology education center that will move to Portland State University—were expected to yield another \$2 million.

"We have hired some phenomenally talented presidents," said Kirby Dyess. "It may be more appropriate for the institutions to have more autonomy." Though appreciated at the three largest campuses—University of Oregon, Oregon State University, and Portland State—that independence creates uncertainty for the four smaller schools, which receive services from the chancellor's office.

An example is the information technology system for the regional institutions, which supports everything from admissions and academic scheduling to fundraising and development. "That's a big one for us," said Elizabeth Zinser, president of Southern Oregon University. "While we very much understand the need for change, it concerns us a lot."

Richmond, who is leading the chancellor's office overhaul, said the smaller campuses will be serviced by merging the system with Oregon State University's IT department. Another initial concern for Zinser, whose campus spawned the

Oregon Shakespeare Festival and other arts festivals, has also been allayed.

"It's thrilled us that they understand that economic development...involves the arts," she said. "They have been very inviting to the presidents in working with them. They want our input. They expect it. The stars appear to be lining up very nicely."

That lineup will be somewhere in the comfort zone the board seeks between micro-managing and rubber stamping. Their initial moves suggest an inclination to free up campuses in academic areas while exercising considerable scrutiny over fiscal management. Where those areas overlap, the board seems quite ambivalent, as a June discussion over fund balances and tuition policies illustrated.

When the board uncovered some \$100 million in state dollars sitting in bank accounts around the system, members pounced on the worst offenders, particularly Western Oregon University, whose projected fund balance of \$9.6 million was nearly 30 percent of the school's \$33 million budget.

"We can't afford surprises," said Richmond. "It will be a surprise to the legislature. This is as serious as if you had a deficit. This undermines our credibility unless we address it."

When the board reviewed the seven universities' plans for tuition increases, only Western's was rejected. The governor, well aware of higher education's credibility gap, was blunt in supporting the decision: "If this were [up to] me, you'd never get a tuition increase at Western Oregon right now," he said.

That move could play well in Salem, noted state Senator Deckert. "Higher education's biggest issue is transparency. That cost them terribly last session. They'll earn a lot of credibility by playing hard with the campuses and saying we're the new sheriff in town."

But playing too hard could run afoul of good management. The board was considering setting a fund balance range of five to 15 percent of revenues, with a target of ten percent. Though there is no national standard, Dennis Jones, President of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, said five percent could be too low.

"If a state had a long history of very stable state funding that didn't change in the middle of the year, then five to 15 is fine," said Jones. "Oregon is so idiosyncratic and erratic. Things can happen in the middle of the year and the whole budget unravels. Because contracts are signed, there are not many degrees of freedom."

The fund balance discussion dovetailed with a heated debate over some campuses' wish to eliminate the "tuition plateau," a volume discount that benefits students who take more than 12 units. The policy, campuses argued, forces part-timers to subsidize full-time students.

But some on the board felt strongly about keeping the plateau. Dyess, for example, recalled taking 21 or 22 credits a semester while pursuing her physics degree at the University of Idaho. "I needed to do that because I needed to get a job and get through to support my brothers so that they could go to college," she said.

"We need to be very careful. We have something in place that encourages people to go through faster."

Some of the proposals entailed 20 percent and 30 percent fee increases for full-time students. Faced with such concerns, OSU revised its proposal to raise tuition an additional six dollars per credit in order to keep the plateau in place.

While several others on the board sided with Dyess, the board's final decision was influenced by a plea from University of Oregon President Dave Frohnmayer not to adopt a "one size fits all" approach to the institutions.

The board stepped back from a confrontation and approved the increases—along with a vague plan for using reserve funds to provide refunds to students facing the greatest increases. Campuses were to report back to the board with mitigation plans.

For student leaders who had opposed the removal of the volume discount, the prospect of a mitigation fund was a "stay of execution," said Wykoff. But the tuition proposals would still have to be approved by legislators, and powerful senators like Democrat Kurt Schrader were likely to be stringent.

"We are all well aware that Measure 30 failed," said Schrader. "That put even more of a burden on the university system. If they try to recoup a whole bunch more above what Measure 30 would have given them, they'll have a great deal of trouble."

Schrader, who last session attacked campus fee remissions as "slush funds" to help out-of-state students, promised to look closely at any refund proposals as well, to make sure they were benefiting needy Oregonians.

Ironically, Jarvis had angered presidents by slowing plateau removal, and its reemergence as a point of tension exposed the unsettled nature of the board's role.

"The relationship between the chancellor and the board and the university presidents is critically important," said Kulongoski. "That debate among this board must occur. If we can't get a line of governance, I don't think we'll ever succeed."

Oregon eliminated its higher education coordinating board in 1989, and though the idea of resurrecting it remains unpopular inside the system, some on the outside think it is time to reconsider. Paul Bragdon, president emeritus of Reed College and interim president of Lewis and Clark College, is among them. Bragdon also has served as education advisor to then-Governor Goldschmidt and as an official at Oregon Health Sciences University.

"After the great wrecking ball has gone through, does anybody have the design for the future in mind?" asked Bragdon. "The dysfunctionality of our institutional setup



**Personal scandal forced former Oregon Governor Neil Goldschmidt to resign as chairman of the state higher education board.**

MICHAEL LLOYD/THE OREGONIAN

has hurt us. Certainly it ended up with a lack of credibility.

"The state of Washington would seem to have a better system—a coordinating board. It's not responsible for the institutions, but it's responsible for policy recommendations from the perspective of what the public interest is perceived to be."

Bassett, a former board member and veteran of the higher education establishment, also worries about the current direction: "When you turn the campuses loose, and shift the focus of the board to advocacy and opportunity, the public interest has more to do with loyalty to a campus than to access for the full array of Oregon's population," he said.

The coordinating board concept has surfaced in some legislators' conversations on the "more better faster" agenda. "There's an opportunity to go there," said Senator Schrader. "But people are reluctant to talk about it politically at this point."

Another delicate topic is the board's desire to devote \$500,000 to a "fighting fund" to provide raises for faculty at risk of leaving the system.

Even faculty are divided on the issue.

**"The elephant in the room is that there is no money."**

**—SENATE DEMOCRAT RYAN DECKERT**

"The unintended result is a morale problem among the faculty," Jim Earl, a University of Oregon English professor, told board members. A contrasting perspective came from Dan Edge, chair of the fisheries department at Oregon State. Edge cringed when he recalled losing Ian Fleming (a world expert on the wild vs. farmed fish debate), who was snatched away by Memorial University in Newfoundland, with a 50 percent pay raise.

Kulongoski pledged to personally approach Schrader and others on the state's emergency board to waive the state's salary freeze for exceptional faculty.

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# A Mixed Blessing?

## Critics object to Mississippi's settlement of a 1975 anti-segregation lawsuit involving the state's "historically black universities"

By Kay Mills

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

**M**ORE THAN THREE decades of courtroom efforts to desegregate higher education systems in 19 southern and border states have produced enrollment increases for black students, but some critics believe that the historically black colleges and universities still lag far behind traditionally white schools when it comes to financial support.

**A 1975 lawsuit charged that Mississippi had maintained a racially segregated higher education system.**

Here in Mississippi, as in most of the 19 states, there has been some progress. Black enrollment has increased somewhat, especially in many traditionally white institutions. New academic programs and new buildings have been added, in an effort to improve the quality of the historically black schools and also to entice more white students to attend them.

Yet 11 of the 19 states, including Mississippi, are still being monitored by the Office for Civil Rights, in the U.S. Department of Education, or by the federal courts. Many supporters of the historically black universities (HBUs) fear that further implementation of the court orders will be stymied by state budget problems and lack of political will.

Across the South there is "a formal mechanism to promote access and opportunity without the infrastructure of financial aid and recruitment of better faculty



*The proposed Mississippi settlement "creates haves and have-nots," says Malvin Williams, vice president for academic affairs at Alcorn State.*

and good students," said Lynn Huntley, president of the Southern Education Foundation, a research and advocacy group.

There is "a K-12 pipeline that is not robust, and a community college pool (of students) that may not be having a chance to transfer to four-year schools," Huntley said. "It's a recipe for basically a stalled effort." She added, "Most people believe the problem has been solved, because more black students are attending historically white schools."

In the 16 states belonging to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), which helps its members form long-range plans, black enrollment at all higher education institutions—two-year and four-year, public and private—increased by 33 percent between 1994 and 2001, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Nationally, black enrollment increased 22 percent in that same time period.

Only 28 percent of black students in the South now attend historically black institutions. In West Virginia, two campuses that were predominantly black—Bluefield State and West Virginia State—are now majority white. A majority of black students in the 16 SREB states attends two-year institutions, but so does a majority of white students.

In Mississippi, black enrollment at traditionally white institutions ranges from 13 percent at the University of Mississippi to 37 percent at Delta State University.

"Of course, there has been progress," said M. Christopher Brown, executive director of the Frederick Patterson Institute of the United Negro College Fund. "However, the original question, which is remediation (for past underfunding), has not been addressed."

Mississippi illustrates the degree of neglect HBUs faced and the patchwork nature of the current solutions. For many years, the bulk of the state's higher education budget went to the white universities. For example, from 1970 to 1974, Mississippi State University received \$41.4 million, while Alcorn State University, like Mississippi State a land-grant institution but an historically black one, got only \$9.4 million.

A lawsuit filed in 1975 by activist Jake Ayers and the Black Mississippians' Council for Higher Education charged that Mississippi had maintained a racially segregated higher education system and that campuses serving black students were markedly inferior to those educating whites.

In response, the state argued that its responsibility was to institute non-discriminatory admissions and hiring practices, not to remedy conditions that came about from decades of underfunding.

In 1992 the U.S. Supreme Court rejected that argument and sent the case back to



PHOTOS BY TOM ROSTER, BLACK STAR, FOR CROSSTALK

*The expansion of Alcorn State's offerings on its Vicksburg campus has enabled four women—Mary Peoples, Ruby Thomas, Brooke Hughes and Jule Peukert—to take classes at night while working during the day.*

the state for remedial action. In 2001, after more legal maneuvering, the State of Mississippi, the federal government and a new lead plaintiff, Congressman Bennie Thompson, negotiated an agreement calling for the state to pay \$503 million to settle the case. In 2002 the legislature committed to financing the agreement, and U.S. District Court Judge Neal Biggers approved it.

State Representative Charles Young, of Meridian, chairman of the Mississippi House Committee on Colleges and Universities, said the leadership at the time of the settlement "felt that we should quit playing with this issue and get on with it." Then-Governor Ronnie Musgrove, House Speaker Tim Ford and others "wanted to stabilize the state—not only in the financial world but also to try to finalize [the case] in the education world," Young said.

The settlement called for HBUs and traditionally white schools to have identical admissions standards (they had been lower for the HBUs). It also required funding for new academic programs for HBUs, to be spent over 17 years. There would also be money for new buildings and deferred maintenance, and an endowment would be created for the HBUs.

(Three Mississippi institutions are historically black—Alcorn State, in the southwestern part of the state; Jackson State, in the capital city; and Mississippi Valley State, in the Delta to the north. Five other public universities, including the University of Mississippi and Mississippi State, were traditionally white.)

However, the settlement did not please all parties.

Alvin Chambliss, one of the longtime lawyers in the case, continues to appeal the court decisions on behalf of many of the original plaintiffs, including Jake Ayers' widow, Lillie. (Ayers died in 1986.) Chambliss disagrees with almost every element of the settlement, not just the amount of money involved, which he considers far too little. "I just cannot sell people out," he said.

Chambliss bases the appeal on the contention that Mississippi still has not satis-

fied its obligation under Title VI to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which bars race or sex discrimination at any higher education institution receiving federal funds. The relief that the settlement agreement provides is inadequate, he says, in part because it does not address the need for more professional education, such as law and pharmacy programs, at the historically black schools. Chambliss also is seeking more financial aid for black students and more flexibility for the HBUs to determine their own programs.

Until this appeal is exhausted, much of the settlement money will continue to be held up.

For example, Alcorn State is offering a master's degree in business administration at Natchez, one of its three campuses. This is an important part of Alcorn's efforts to upgrade its academic offerings, in part to attract more white students, as it must under the pending settlement. Workers

**"Of course, there has been progress. However, the original question, which is remediation (for past underfunding), has not been addressed."**

— M. CHRISTOPHER BROWN

there are putting the finishing touches on a 46,000-square-foot, \$9 million business administration building, which is also part of the settlement. But there's a catch: Money to equip the new building is tied up in the appeal.

"A significant concern about the settlement is that it is a 'hold harmless' kind of agreement," said Christopher Brown of the United Negro College Fund. The state seems to be saying, "this is full repayment for what we owe," and if there are future needs due to deficiencies, there will not be an opportunity to get more money. This is "an ideal case of Catch-22," Brown added.

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“There are institutions that could use the money now; but if they take the money now, that may be all there is. That’s the real conundrum.”

Brown said a major problem is that the courts, policymakers and the public try to treat desegregation at the college level the way they did public school desegregation. “They have extrapolated the goals, aims and strategies (of the Supreme Court school desegregation decisions) to postsecondary education,” he said.

With public schools, “people wanted equal education and required all races to be in the same place at the same time.” But that doesn’t necessarily work for higher education. “Colleges are very different,” Brown said. “Students vote with their feet, based on the curriculum, the faculty, proximity to their homes, the foot-

**Critics contend that the settlement agreement provides inadequate relief and does not address the need for more professional education at the historically black schools.**

ball or basketball teams.” Brown acknowledged that he does not know what approach should be taken but said, “the research bears out the conclusion that we are using the wrong strategy” to desegregate higher education.

Opponents of the Mississippi settlement take issue with many of its provisions, for example the uniform admissions standards. Previously, the historically white universities required a score of at least 15 on the American College Test (ACT), and the HBUs required only a 13 score. Now the test score requirements, which are combined with an applicant’s grade point average to determine eligibility, are the same for all the schools.

The change supposedly means there is

no discrimination, but Ivory Phillips, dean of Jackson State’s College of Education, pointed out that the new cutoff score is a few points higher than the average score for black students. Since a vast majority of the high schools that black students attend in Mississippi do not offer adequate college preparatory courses, the new admissions standards leave those students at a great disadvantage, said Phillips, who opposes the settlement.

The settlement does include many benefits for the historically black campuses, including \$246 million for new academic programs. For example, Jackson State is creating an engineering school. Mississippi Valley State will offer new master’s degrees in business administration, computer science, bioinformatics (the management of genetic data) and educational leadership, as well as a new undergraduate degree in special education.

The expansion of Alcorn State’s offerings in Vicksburg has enabled four women—Mary Peoples, Ruby Thomas, Brooke Hughes and Jule Peukert—to take education classes at night while working during the day. Peoples and Thomas are black; Hughes and Peukert are white. All four either are teachers or want to become teachers, but had found no affordable, convenient master’s degree classes until Alcorn expanded its evening program at Vicksburg, 40 miles from the university’s main campus in rural Lorman.

The legislature also has committed the state to spending \$75 million on capital improvements at the HBUs. Jackson State is waiting for \$20 million for its new engineering building, and Mississippi Valley has plans for a new building to house its bioinformatics program. “We also are in dire need of improvements in the library,” said Valley’s president, Lester Newman. “A library is very basic to the heart and soul of an institution, but that, too, will have to wait.” The \$5 million for library renovation is part of the pending settlement.

The three HBUs will share a \$70 million publicly financed endowment created by the settlement agreement. But they can tap into that money only if they maintain at least ten percent “other-race,” that is, non-black, enrollment for three consecu-



PHOTOS BY TOM ROSTER, BLACK STAR, FOR CROSSTALK

**Biologist Alex Acholonu, faculty senate president at Alcorn State, complained that professors at historically black universities are paid less than their counterparts at traditionally white schools.**

tive years. To date, Alcorn State, with 10.6 percent other-race enrollment this year—up from 4.5 percent in 1997—is the only one of the three to meet that requirement and has done so for only one year. Non-black enrollment is 6.7 percent at Jackson State, three percent at Mississippi Valley State.

Top administrators at each of the three HBUs have voiced concern about the provisions in the settlement agreement on how to improve their universities. The settlement “creates haves and have-nots,” said Malvin Williams, Alcorn’s vice president for academic affairs. “Students in business can see some direct results of Ayers (the 1975 lawsuit) but it doesn’t help my English faculty and the rest of the university. One of the things we wanted to do to attract other-race traditional students was to improve the core curriculum,” Williams said. “[The settlement] really only touches pockets of students, not students across the campus. And as an academic administrator that’s one of my biggest frustrations.”

Alcorn President Clinton Bristow, Jr., thinks the engineering school that went to Jackson State should have come to his land-grant campus instead. He had hoped to establish an electro-mechanical engineering program that would enable graduates to enter the field of robotics. Otherwise, “we got virtually all that we wanted,” Bristow said. That includes a new master’s degree program in biotechnology at the Lorman campus, a master’s in accounting at Natchez and a master’s degree program for physician assistants. However, all three of these programs are waiting for the release of settlement dollars.

The new programs earmarked for Valley State “were not our first choice,” said President Newman. His school wanted to offer degrees in allied health professions such as physical therapy and occupational therapy. “Health care and employment are the top concerns in the Delta and there’s a critical need for these jobs.”

At Jackson State, the School of Social Work now offers a Ph.D. in social work, the only doctoral program in this field in the state. This allows Jackson State to be a

centerpiece in working with people affected by “the social issues in this state—infant mortality, child abuse and neglect, unemployment,” said Ruth Williams, the school’s associate dean.

The doctoral program has allowed the university to hire more professors, add to library resources and encourage more faculty to do research. “These things benefit students,” Williams said. “If we hadn’t had (these) funds, we would have done some of what we’ve done but not as much. It’s almost like having a good cup of coffee in the morning—everyone was revitalized and excited about it.”

Jackson State President Ronald Mason considers the Ayers case “a mixed blessing” for his university. “On the one hand, we have expanded our programs and enhanced our campus and had an impetus to start working on the neighborhood,” he said. But the settlement “has also given us expensive programs,” such as engineering, “probably more expensive to operate than

**Only 28 percent of black students in the South now attend historically black institutions.**

we’ll ever get the money for. It raises expectations for the institution, and those expectations only will be met if we can raise private funds. That’s a challenge. The settlement hasn’t given us programs that produce wealthy alumni—law and medicine. The programs at Jackson State are needed but they are not what you could call lucrative programs.”

The federal district court vetoed proposals for law and pharmacy schools at Jackson State, saying there was no demonstrable need for them. But Jackson senior Armanthia Duncan, a political science major from Gulfport, would like to see more professional schools on her campus. She plans to go to law school and is aiming for Howard University, in Washington, D.C., because “there’s no white institution that can give me a nurturing type of envi-



**Jaquez Carr, Nikolay Gudovich and Trena Boyd (left to right) belong to a multicultural student organization at Alcorn State.**

ronment and prepare me to deal with the corporate community.”

“We love where we are,” said fellow political science major Mariama Gibbs, a Jackson State senior. “It’s a wonderful school but we want it to be considered at the same level as the other schools in the state.”

Of the three historically black universities, Alcorn State has had the most success recruiting white students, who accounted for 10.6 percent of its 3,309 students last year. About 40 percent of the 88 students enrolled in the MBA program on Alcorn’s Natchez campus last fall were white.

A big plus for Alcorn is that the Russians are coming. The tennis coach recruited Mikhail Frolov in 1998. Frolov brought his girlfriend, and soon a number of other students arrived from Voronezh, a city in southwestern Russia. Today there are about 35, all on scholarships. To encourage interaction between the international and American students, a multicultural student organization meets once a week for discussions of everything from world affairs to community service.

One of the Russians, Nikolay Gudovich, a 19-year-old computer science student, finds the educational system different because “you choose what you want to take. In Russia, you get your schedule and it’s compulsory.” Nikolay’s family was quite ready to help him come to Alcorn. It doesn’t matter to them whether he is at a black school or a white school. “Russians don’t know this segregation. It’s not an

issue there,” Gudovich said.

Those opposing the settlement, like Alcorn’s faculty senate president Alex Acholonu, call it “deficient.” It’s not so much the material aspects that bother him, said Acholonu, a biology professor, although he pointed out that faculty pay scales are not equitable between the HBUs and the formerly all-white institutions and that Alcorn receives much less financial support than the state’s other land-grant institution, Mississippi State.

The average faculty salary at Alcorn is \$44,652 a year; at Mississippi State, the other land-grant institution, it is \$59,230. Faculty at Jackson State, an HBU, earn an average of \$48,822, while their counterparts at the University of Mississippi average \$58,627, according to state figures.

“The crux of the question is a change of policy, a change of attitude,” said Acholonu. He does not think that has happened. When the state starts new programs, it puts them where white students can attend, he argued. “Where is the help? They are forcing us to beg on our knees to get white students. White and black students have always been able to attend Alcorn,” he added. But now the whites are there on scholarships. “Where is the justice?”

But Clinton Bristow, Alcorn’s president, disagrees. “That doesn’t bother me,” he said. “I’m in the education business. This is product competitiveness. If you want a consumer to buy your product, you advertise and you seek to have your brand

accepted by consumers. Spending to diversify doesn’t bother me.”

Most HBU administrators might not be happy with the settlement but they want to get on with it. Alcorn’s Malvin Williams said that when he is asked if the settlement is what he wants, “the answer is no, it’s not what I want. But if I have to wait another five years to take a chance to get more of what I want, with no guarantee that would happen, I don’t want to do that.”

“[The delays] are causing us to get less money,” said Alcorn President Bristow. “Each day I don’t get that dollar, it diminishes in value. We can’t build the biotechnology center, we can’t get the faculty we need, we can’t buy scientific equipment we need. We’re looking at [the settlement] as really positioning us to be in a leadership role.”

Having studied the case in detail, Albert Samuels, assistant professor of political science at Southern University, in Louisiana, agrees that there is a need to move on, although he admires the tenacity of Lillie Ayers, the other plaintiffs and Alvin Chambliss, their lawyer. Samuels, author of “Is Separate Unequal? Black Colleges and the Challenge to Desegregation,” sees real problems with the settlement but does not think continued litigation is going to work, given the current political and legal climate—not just in Mississippi but nationally.

Nor is he sure about the legislative priorities of Mississippi’s new Republican governor, Haley Barbour. “Those things

## Desegregated States

Arkansas	North Carolina
Delaware	Oklahoma
Georgia	South Carolina
Missouri	West Virginia

## States Still Being Monitored

Alabama	Ohio
Florida	Pennsylvania
Kentucky	South Carolina
Louisiana	Texas
Maryland	Virginia
Mississippi	

can change,” Samuels said. “Every state in the union is in a fiscal crunch. It would be very easy for Mississippi to say, ‘look, we can’t do this right now,’ with rising health care costs and other issues. In this environment of shifting priorities, will the legislature live up to its commitments? That’s where I think the efforts should be directed—to make them at least live up to these commitments, at a minimum. Then they can fight another day.” ♦

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

## OREGON

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“This is going to be a tough call,” he said. “I’m asking them to amend a policy that I insisted on. If we wait until the next biennium, we will lose more people.”

But Schrader has questions. “If we give this professor a raise, is he going to be a better teacher? If we are primarily research institutions, then that discussion has merit. But if our primary goal is to educate

**“Our stable economy and quality of life is dependent on our institutions of higher education.”**

—OREGON GOVERNOR  
**TED KULONGOSKI**

Oregonians, raising salaries when we have no money to keep the programs alive would be inappropriate.”

With so much hand-wringing over a mere \$500,000, the access and affordability plan developed by a working group at the governor’s behest sounds wildly ambitious.

The idea is to establish an endowment through a constitutional amendment and build the corpus over ten years. The income would be sufficient to raise the Oregon Opportunity Grant to \$4,500 for four-year students and \$2,500 for community college students (from current levels of

\$1,482 and \$1,257 respectively). Students attending private institutions would face the \$4,500 cap, higher than the current cap of \$3,232, and more grants would be available. At those levels, the private colleges remain open to the plan, said Gary Andeen of the Oregon Independent College Association.

Committee co-chair Timothy Nesbitt blamed lower-than-average financial aid resources for Oregon’s poor affordability ranking—an F in the report, “Measuring Up 2002,” published by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (which also publishes *National CrossTalk*). Only two of every five students who qualify for a Pell Grant receive an Opportunity Grant, and Oregon’s average financial aid spending of \$133 per enrolled undergraduate is less than half of the national average. “We need to be doubling or tripling our efforts,” he said.

For now, Nesbitt says the group is simply designing the program, not the funding source. Without funding, though, the initiative sounded more like a wish list. The governor mentioned two possible sources—capital gains taxes or revenues from forest lands. But capital gains are notoriously unpredictable, and business leaders are already seeking a reduction. Logging projects face existing opposition from environmentalists, so it is not clear how the state would earn more from forests.

The governor and board also were thinking about private fundraising. “If you were to ask industry to fund one third, and private foundations one third, you might find a fair number of people who would be

interested,” said Dyess.

Part of the governor’s plan, it seems, is to begin by winning the “hearts and minds” of Oregonians on the idea of college access for all. “The governor wants grassroots efforts here,” said President Elizabeth Zinser of Southern Oregon University. “We’ve been told that we’re expected to generate a groundswell of participation for this.”

Championing the issue along with the governor will be Pernsteiner, who has held posts at Portland State, the University of Oregon and the chancellor’s office and returns to the system after a two-year stint at UC Santa Barbara. His official title is chief operating officer, executive vice chancellor, and acting chancellor, though the degree of celebration about his hiring suggested that some hope the “acting” part will be removed. In an interview, Pernsteiner did not rule out the possibility.

Because his expertise is in budgets, a Pernsteiner chancellorship would signal a new direction for the job of chancellor that some think is healthy. “The real guts of the system is in the budget,” said Duncan Wyse, executive director of the Oregon Business Council. “The way the board can influence policy is through how it sets rules for the allocation of money. A simpler, leaner chancellor’s office that is focusing on that issue will help the board have more impact.”

It would also make academic leaders like Frohnmayer, Moseley, Ray and Portland State’s Daniel Bernstine the face of higher education in Oregon. In numerous interviews, Pernsteiner won praise



*Elizabeth Zinser, president of Southern Oregon University, chats with Colin Murphy, student government vice president.*

from system officials, student leaders, private college representatives, legislators and business leaders. The feeling seems to be mutual.

“Perhaps the biggest enticement that could be offered to me is to work with this board,” Pernsteiner said. “This board is excitement personified. Your governor has a vision that will animate this state for decades to come. We are in the optimism business because we are in the business of the future.” ♦

*Pamela Burdman is a freelance writer in Berkeley and former higher education reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle.*

# OTHER VOICES



## College Presidents, or CEOs?

**Presidential pay is escalating at a time when institutions are cutting budgets**

By Robert Atwell

**W**HILE MANY SITTING and aspiring college presidents seem to be applauding the run-up in presidential compensation, at least a few of us are concerned. The escalation is thus far largely limited to a few wealthy private institutions, but it has also opened the door for the governing boards of public institutions to engage in keeping up with the Joneses.

There is no doubt that the job of college or university president, always difficult, has become much more demanding, with increased attention to fundraising, the intense competition within the industry, and the necessity to work with stakeholder groups with often conflicting pressures. It may not be a 24-7 job, but for many it allows little time for a private life. I have known and worked with hundreds of presidents and have admired the energy, tenacity and vision of most of them.

But it does not follow that governing boards should follow the recent corporate models characterized by excessive CEO greed, often unrelated to performance. For one thing, some of us believe that greed is out of hand in corporate America as the gap between the compensation of top executives and their workers grows exponentially and scandalously. That is something to be deplored and not emulated.

But more importantly, successful college presidents need the support of their faculties and other stakeholders. Governing boards too often believe that their institutions are just like a business, in which the CEO, supported by a few carefully selected directors and executives, can call the shots. That is not generally the case in academe, where the stakeholders have much more sway than in corporate America. The responsibilities are comparable but corporate CEOs have much more authority than college presidents. The very term “CEO” is a bit misplaced when applied to academe.

***Governing boards should not follow the recent corporate models characterized by excessive CEO greed, often unrelated to performance.***

Most college presidents have the credentials and academic record associated with the teaching and research enterprise. This is not to minimize the success of a few “non-traditional” presidents—and I have advocated that governing boards and search committees should be more open to the candidacies of non-traditional persons—but their road to acceptance is made more difficult by the fact that they have not “gone through the chairs.”

Most college presidents have the credentials and academic record associated with the teaching and research enterprise. This is not to minimize the success of a few “non-traditional” presidents—and I have advocated that governing boards and search committees should be more open to the candidacies of non-traditional persons—but their road to acceptance is made more difficult by the fact that they have not “gone through the chairs.”

Academe has a rather rigid institutional pecking order, accompanied by the snobbery of faculty members who are not easily persuaded to accept any leadership—it is often said that the academy is the last bastion of professional anarchy—and, when persuaded, insist that the leader be one of them. This world view is both the glory and the curse of our industry. Anything that separates the leader from the followers, and escalating presidential compensation is certainly a big factor in this separation, is divisive and ultimately works against the notion of shared governance which is so central to most of our institutions.

It is the case that many presidents (particularly community college presidents) are underpaid, just as it is the case that most faculty and senior staff members are underpaid in light of their responsibilities and their value to society. An oversupply of Ph.D.s in many fields, coupled with the budgetary problems of many institutions, has allowed professorial salaries to fall behind other professions. By contrast, one of the factors contributing to escalating presidential salaries is the mistaken belief that good people will not otherwise

take these difficult positions. My experience in the executive search business convinces me that there is no shortage of good candidates for strong institutions and, while compensation is important, it is not the major driver of presidential aspirants. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to lead a college or a university and the experience of many of us who have held these jobs is that with all the difficulties, it is hard to imagine a more rewarding experience.

In addition to the corporate mentality of many governing board members, and the urge to “keep up with the Joneses,” another major force driving up presidential pay is the pressure applied by search firms, which have a tendency to raise the salary bar somewhat higher than necessary in order to be sure their client institutions get the people they want.

Market-driven excesses in football and basketball coaching salaries are another important factor. Those salaries have reached new levels of excess at the top levels of NCAA Division I and are an embarrassing statement about the values of our institutions. Making little effort to hold the line on coaching salaries and feeling embarrassed about presidents being paid less than football and basketball coaches, some governing boards simply apply the same misplaced sense of values to the presidents.

For presidential pay to be escalating at a time when institutions are cutting budgets, laying off faculty and staff, denying access and raising tuitions undercuts the credibility of the institutions and damages the relationship between them and the publics they are meant to serve.

Governing boards are urged to exercise caution in the matter of presidential compensation and not follow the herd. I have long believed that multi-year contracts are more important than high compensation because they afford the president some security when he or she is forced to make decisions that will seriously alienate one or more stakeholder groups.

Academe is increasingly market-driven in everything from curricula offerings to enrollment management and corporate sponsorship of research. Now we are seeing a seemingly market-driven escalation of presidential salaries. While respecting market economics, our colleges and universities have always stood for values that rise above market considerations. The liberal arts embody a set of values by which an educated person is more than a candidate for the labor force, and scholarship is about more than what will sell in the market. These values are seriously compromised when presidential salaries escalate while faculty and staff salaries stagnate. ♦

*Robert Atwell was president of the American Council on Education from 1984 to 1996. From 1970 to 1978 he was president of Pitzer College.*



## Academic Freedom and National Security

**Do anti-terrorism measures go too far?**

By Robert M. O'Neil

**S**HORTLY AFTER one hundred members of Congress called for the resignation of an outspoken Columbia University anthropologist, the case became fodder for Fox News' The O'Reilly Factor. Columbia's new President, Lee Bollinger, was invited to appear and discuss his defense of a junior colleague's academic freedom. When Bollinger declined that invitation, I was asked to take his place, and agreed to do so on March 31, 2003. The segment opened by noting that Nicholas DeGenova, the outspoken anthropologist, had told a Columbia teach-in opposing the war in Iraq that he wished for “a million Mogadishus”—the reference recalling the tragic ambush of U.S. forces in Somalia, vividly portrayed in the film “Black Hawk Down.”

After explaining to Mr. O'Reilly why we in the American academic community do not dismiss faculty members even for making outrageous statements, I was startled to find my host in substantial agreement. “I'll tell you what I would do if I were Bollinger,” he ventured. “I wouldn't fire this guy; I wouldn't fire this DeGenova. OK? Because I agree with

***Escalating presidential compensation is divisive and ultimately works against the notion of shared governance which is so central to most of our institutions.***

you. You've got to tolerate this kind of speech." Instead, suggested O'Reilly, "I'd shun him. I wouldn't invite him to any faculty things." As the screen shifted to a commercial break, I wondered whether I had heard correctly. A review of the transcript the next morning confirmed the accuracy of my perception—and the startling variation from what most listeners would have expected.

Barely a month after this exchange, another defining moment occurred in the evolution of post-September 11, 2001, academic freedom. A Senate subcommittee released on May 5 the long-sealed transcripts of hearings that Senator Joseph McCarthy had conducted behind closed doors a half century earlier. The release offered a sobering reminder of what Joseph Welch had rightly termed the reckless cruelty of Wisconsin's junior senator. The focus of those secret hearings had been a group of potential witnesses, many of them college professors, whom the subcommittee eventually decided not to interrogate in public. One of those who were slated to be spared such public humiliation actually took his own life before learning of his reprieve.

This startling disclosure evoked diverse reactions on Capitol Hill. Senator Carl Levin, who had recently chaired the relevant subcommittee, expressed his confidence that such excesses would not recur. "There's a greater awareness," he explained, "of McCarthyism and what tactics can be used by people who are trying to quiet dissent." And, he added, "there's greater resistance against those who would try to still voices that they disagree with."

His colleague Russ Feingold, the only Senator to oppose the USA PATRIOT Act (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism), offered a less sanguine view: "What I'm hearing from constituents suggests a climate of fear toward our government that is unprecedented, at least in my memory." And, lest one overlook a special credential, Feingold added, "Don't forget that I am the junior senator from Wisconsin."

In the record of events and developments since September 11, 2001, there is ample warrant for both these views. Within the past year or so, the academic community has received a substantial amount of news that is both good and bad on the resiliency of academic freedom to the demands of national security. It may be useful to review several areas of special attention and activity, through which we might assess whether Levin's optimism or Feingold's pessimism better describes current conditions.

The basic policies and actions of the Federal Government offer the optimal starting point. The USA PATRIOT Act has remained a major focus of academic community concern. Despite serious talk in some government circles of a possible second round of restrictive legislation, the Congressional focus has been more upon mitigating the harshest provisions of the original law than on adopting a wholly new statute.

Although no amendments have yet passed either house, several bipartisan proposals have been introduced—for example, to exempt libraries and bookstores from the gravely intrusive Business Records section, to narrow the "roving" wiretap authorization, and to curb the "sneak and peak" authority which law enforcement had received in the fall of 2001. There was substantial academic community support for the Safety and Freedom Ensured (SAFE) Act introduced in the Senate in late fall 2003, by a bipartisan group that included at least one conservative Republican.

The House came within a single vote of curbing some of the most intrusive of the PATRIOT Act's provisions. On July 7, a tie vote failed to approve the Freedom to Read Amendment, which would have cut off funding for Justice

Department searches of bookstore and library records under section 215 of the Act. Although Senate concurrence would have been uncertain at best, so strong a showing of concern in the House suggests substantial erosion of the near unanimity with which the Act became law in the fall of 2001. Any other Congressional action before the election seems unlikely.

Meanwhile, the central issue of the Act's longevity remains unresolved. The original PATRIOT Act provided that some of its most onerous sections would expire four years from their effective date. George W. Bush and others in his administration persistently urged the repeal of the mandated sunset, a step that would make permanent some of the law's worst features. In late May 2004, a bill was introduced in the Senate to remove the sunsets. Although the early expiration date remains in force, and is unlikely to be altered before the 2004 presidential election, it is important to note that many of the most objectionable or invasive provisions of the Act—the Business Records section, for example—are not scheduled to expire, and will remain in force unless separately repealed.

The USA PATRIOT Act has also been targeted in the courts. No fewer than three lawsuits were filed in late 2003 and early 2004 to challenge certain of the law's provisions on First Amendment and due process grounds. Again, the Business Records section is an example. That provision, section 215,

enables law enforcement agents to obtain from a secret court an order that compels the holder of such records to reveal what books a person bought from a bookstore or borrowed from a library, even though the person may not be even a remotely suspected terrorist. The recipient of such a demand may not reveal that fact to anyone, most especially not to the person whose records were sought and obtained. Not surprisingly, this "gag" provision remains the major focus of civil libertarians and academic freedom champions.

Another development at the federal level has evoked deep concern within the academic community. There had been early suggestions that a U.S. journal editor who reviewed manuscripts or gave advice to authors from certain parts of the world might invite official reprisal. That concern, remarked *Science* magazine editor (and former Stanford University President) Donald Kennedy, was overreaction—anyone who so cautioned a journal's staff was giving "simply bad advice."

Ironically, the fear turned out to be closer to reality than the alternative. In the late fall of 2003, the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control advised a scholarly journal that (under an obscure regulation) trade embargoes against Iran, Iraq, Cuba, Libya and Sudan forbade U.S. editors and publishers from editing manuscripts or providing other forms of editorial advice to authors from any of those countries.

Although OFAC did, in April 2004, assure the original journal that its peer review process, and related style and copy editing, would not violate the trade embargo, that clarification may only have made matters worse. The OFAC letter went on to warn that "collaborative interaction" and any other "substantive or artistic alterations or enhancements of the manuscript" might still be deemed unlawful "trading with the enemy." Thus U.S. journals still risk potential liability for engaging in the sorts of editorial activity that scholarly journals and literary magazines routinely provide.

In mid April 2004, a group of academic organizations issued a strong and highly critical statement calling for the elimination of such government restrictions. Noting that Congress had (in a 1994 Free Trade in Ideas Amendment) specifically exempted the transmission of "information" as well as "information materials" from the trade embargo legislation, the statement insisted that OFAC's position was contrary to a clear legislative intent. Moreover, the statement added, any such constraint was in clear violation of First Amendment freedom of expression.

Several other concerns persist at the federal level. A major target of academic community concern has been the deterrent effect on foreign visitors and graduate students of delays and even denials of visas essential to U.S. visits. The situation has not improved, and may even have gotten worse. The General Accounting Office recently conceded that the average time required to process a visa-related security check was an unacceptable 67 days. In the spring of 2004 a survey of universities that traditionally enroll the largest number of international graduate students sounded a further alarm. Of the 19 major research graduate centers responding to the survey, all reported a decline in foreign student applications during the current year.

*continued next page*

***"What I'm hearing from constituents suggests a climate of fear toward our government that is unprecedented, at least in my memory."***

**—U.S. SENATOR  
RUSS FEINGOLD**

***The third academic year since September 11, 2001 once again brought a mixture of good and bad news.***

***The academic community is concerned about the deterrent effect on foreign visitors and graduate students of delays and even denials of visas.***



*"My parents never talk to me about S-E-X—all they talk about is S-A-Ts."*

**TOP UP***from page 1*

by exactly half. Less than one percent of the gross domestic product goes to higher education in the U.K., compared to 2.7 percent in the United States. A British university spends \$9,200 annually to educate an undergraduate, while a top American university spends more than \$36,800.

Yet the number of university-bound students in the U.K. is still rising. This, along with general population growth, could leave British universities drowning beneath a deluge of 240,000 additional applicants per year before the end of the decade. To make matters worse, an estimated 30,000 more students from the ten newly admitted European Union nations are expected at these universities, where they now qualify for resident tuition—at a loss to the universities of an estimated \$42.3 million a year.

The schools say they need another \$10 billion to cover annual operating costs. They are also struggling with a nearly \$15

billion backlog of repairs. Salaries, the major faculty union says, have fallen by 40 percent relative to other professions since the 1980s, leaving them far below those paid by universities in the United States. Among the world's top 50 libraries, not a single one is in a British university.

The government's complicated strategy for addressing these problems is colloquially known as "top-up fees." It will allow universities to charge tuition of up to \$5,520 per year beginning in 2006, for which most students will take out loans that they will be required to repay after graduation—but only once their salaries reach \$27,600. The principal and interest will be deducted from their paychecks at a rate of nine percent on anything they earn above that threshold.

To make this idea more palatable, the government has promised financial aid in the amount of nearly \$5,000 each for low-income students, and has required the universities to add an additional \$520, essentially covering the full cost of tuition (though low-income students still would presumably take out loans to cover per-

sonal expenses).

If all universities charge the maximum tuition, they'll collect an extra \$1.8 billion a year. They will then have to subtract a

***Imagine the American system of costly and complex university financing and heavy student debt imposed from scratch on a country where, until six years ago, tuition was completely free.***

collective \$92 million to pay for required aid to low-income students, leaving about \$1.7 billion more than they get now—still far less than is needed. "There's a big problem, and this does not address it," said Ben Brinded, president of the Cambridge University Student Union, which

has been in the thick of the debate. "Universities are underfunded. There's a definite consensus that the system needs to change. The problem is, that's not going to change. Even after this plan takes effect, the universities will still be underfunded."

Meanwhile, the cost to the government of making all of its many compromises—including paying low-income students' tuition and subsidizing other students' loans—will come to about \$2.2 billion, the logic of which is lost on some opposition ministers of Parliament. "In order to raise slightly less than £1 billion a year for universities, the taxpayer is going to have to spend something like £1.2 billion," said Conservative education minister Tim Collins, adding (with a British flair for understatement): "That's an extremely inefficient way of proceeding."

If there is concern over the effect of this plan on university finances, there's near rebellion over its impact on students. By one estimate, top-up fees combined with increases in the cost of living could boost average student debt at graduation

**OTHER VOICES***from preceding page*

For fifteen of those campuses, the one-year decline exceeded ten percent. Moreover, the institutions most affected by the drop in applications reported that international students, from whom they were hearing, perceive an unwelcome climate in the United States, especially in scientific fields and even in the study of business, and noted that these students were "searching for academic opportunities outside the U.S."

What remains unclear is whether such losses are temporary, as one would fervently hope, rather than reflecting a permanent diversion of academic talent to apparently friendlier nations in which to pursue graduate science and engineering studies.

In a very different vein, a serious Congressional proposal has drawn concern from the academic community. In early spring 2004, the Senate Committee on Health, Education,

***Three lawsuits were filed in late 2003 and early 2004, challenging the USA PATRIOT Act on First Amendment and due process grounds.***

Labor and Pensions took up a bill that would establish a politically appointed advisory board to "review, monitor, apprise and evaluate the activities" of federally funded international area studies programs. The task of such bodies would be to assure that such programs are designed and implemented to "meet the national need" and to "reflect diverse perspectives and the full range of views on world regions, foreign languages and international affairs." The bill had already passed the House on a voice vote, almost unnoticed in the fall of last year, and seemed headed for Senate acceptance as well.

The apparent rationale for such a measure was Congressional concern about balance in Middle Eastern studies programs, and a broader perception that some area studies programs reflected an anti-American bias, and discouraged students from working for the U.S. government. Fearing that an ostensibly "advisory" body could come to easily assert substantive control over area studies programs for political ends, many national academic groups have strongly urged the Senate to defeat such an ominous surveillance or monitoring process.

Although national security issues have been muted or even absent on most campuses this past year, two notable exceptions merit attention. In February 2004, a federal grand jury in Des Moines, Iowa, issued subpoenas to Drake University, demanding detailed information about an anti-war conference that had taken place at the private university's law school the previous November.

The subpoenas also sought extensive information about the sponsoring organization, Drake's student chapter of the National Lawyers Guild. Among the requested records were lists of all persons who attended the conference, and reports that the student group was required to file annually with the law school dean's office. The apparent basis for such demands was the belief that the conference had triggered a physical protest at a nearby military base, held a week or so later.

News of the subpoenas quickly became a national cause célèbre. The Lawyers Guild at once filed a motion in federal district court to quash the subpoenas. Just as quickly, a battery of national groups, notably ACLU and AAUP, entered the fray, expressing their deep concern that such a foray into sensitive files smacked of McCarthyism—apart from what seemed to be grave risk to the federally protected privacy of sensitive student information under the Buckley Amendment. Drake's president took a very firm stand in defense of the conference and the students' freedom.

A few days later, an obviously embarrassed U.S. attorney withdrew his demands—although not before the federal judge had imposed an unprecedented gag order on all the participants. Moreover, it now became clear that law enforcement agents had attended the fall conference, so that most if not all of the subpoenaed information was already in hand—further suggesting a harassing motive behind the seemingly superfluous demands.

The prosecutor explained, in terms that satisfied hardly anyone, that his office was concerned only about the catalyst for the physical attack on the military base, and had no desire to target "persons peacefully and lawfully engaged in rallies, which are conducted under the protection of the First Amendment." Yet the fact that such demands could be made at all, and that those who had been subpoenaed could even for a day be barred from speaking publicly on that subject, sounded an ominous note despite the eventually happy outcome.

At almost the exact same time as the events in Iowa, there was also trouble in Texas. Several U.S. Army intelligence agents aggressively questioned students and staff members about a conference on "Islam and the Law: The Question of Sexism" that had taken place in January at the University of Texas at Austin.

The central theme of the conference was how traditional Islam treats women. The agents visited the UT Law School in early February, seeking information about three Muslim men who had been at the conference and had aroused the suspicions of government lawyers from a nearby military base. When the agents sought a roster of conference participants, but were unable to obtain it, they left the campus empty handed.

After university officials had expressed concern about the visit, in late March the Army's Intelligence and Security Command issued a formal statement acknowledging that the actions of the agents had been out of order. Any such investigation of civilians on U.S. soil is to be conducted by the FBI and not by any branch of the armed forces, explained the statement, so the intelligence agents had clearly "exceeded their authority."

While leaving open for another day the much larger and more troubling question of whether an FBI foray would have been unlawful, the Army's confession of error did at least reduce anxieties in Austin, which had arisen so closely in time to the concern in Des Moines about the subpoenas. In both instances, federal officials at least retreated from a potentially contentious area of conflict, and thereby avoided what might have been grave threats to academic freedom. In neither case, however, was there any clear vindication of the legal interests of those who sponsor controversial events on college and university campuses.

The third academic year since September 11, 2001 once again brought a mixture of good and bad news. While there is much basis for concern, things could have been far worse. Congress could by now have enacted PATRIOT Act II or could have repealed the sunset provisions, as the administration has persistently urged. On the other hand, Congress might have adopted the SAFE Act, or might otherwise have mitigated the PATRIOT Act's most onerous and invasive powers.

Similarly, one could have hoped that by now at least one federal judge would have struck down such measures as the Business Records section of the law. Yet those same courts could have upheld some of the challenged provisions, deferring to national security needs and exigent conditions.

So it goes, through the series of issues and events we have reviewed here. Such is the pattern—down to the February forays in Des Moines and Austin, which on one hand should never have happened at all, yet on the other hand could have ended far worse than they did. ♦

*Robert M. O'Neil is a professor at University of Virginia School of Law and director of the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression.*

to more than \$62,000 by 2010. (The government says the average debt will be \$27,600.) Even with financial aid that covers up to the full price of tuition, many low-income students who are concerned about the debt they might assume in order to pay their living costs may steer clear of higher education.

This comes at a time when it is already the case that only 19 percent of young people from the poorest families go to college in England, compared to 50 percent of the children of the richest. The other group most likely to be affected is the mid-

**British universities will be allowed for the first time to charge different tuitions depending on the perceived value of their programs.**

dle-class students who cannot afford to pay the new tuition rate but don't qualify for grants.

It is a familiar controversy with a different accent. "We are looking with an eye to what has happened in the U.S.," said Claire Callender, a professor of social policy at London South Bank University who has studied the potential impact. "That's not the way we do things in the U.K."

Students in England contributed nothing at all toward the cost of their tuition until 1998, when a fixed fee of about \$1,840 was imposed, payable at the beginning of each academic year. Every university was required by law to charge the same amount to undergraduates, from

newly established polytechnic institutes to Oxford and Cambridge. In 1999, government-subsidized "maintenance grants" for room and board were also phased out and replaced entirely with loans.

Callender, whose university is in a low-income district south of the Thames and serves a largely low-income student body, has undertaken the most exhaustive research into student attitudes toward debt and other issues related to the effect of top-up fees. "My personal concerns are very much about the low-income groups. That's why I'm sitting in a university like this one instead of on the other side of the river," Callender said, blanketing a conference table with transparencies covered in colored bar graphs.

Among other things, these demonstrate her findings that students from poorer backgrounds have shouldered a larger share of the costs introduced in 1998 than students from wealthier families. But students from all backgrounds have accumulated spiraling debts. Between 1995 and 1998, the percentage of U.K. students taking out loans rose from 59 to 71. By 2001, 81 percent of students were borrowing to pay their way through school. And the debts of students graduating last year were two and a half times more than those who graduated five years earlier. Low-income students owed an average of about \$17,860, and higher-income students owed about \$12,520.

"Student debt is a class issue," Callender said. "The policies are regressive, because poor students have to pay relatively more toward their education."

The government insists that its new policies will actually encourage more students to consider higher education because they'll no longer have to hand over any money in advance. This, the government says, will also put less financial pressure on these students' families. The poorest students, the government points out, also will be eligible for aid that adds up to the full cost of tuition. It says that between 35 and 37 percent of students will have their full costs covered. (Today, 45 percent do.)

But Callender says it is less the reality than the perception about costs—and, particularly, debt—that makes low-income students four times less likely to go to college than wealthier students. Of 2,000 prospective students surveyed, those from low social classes said they were more likely to be discouraged from going to college because of their fear of incurring debt. The

government's new policies "are predicated on the accumulation of debt and thus are in danger of deterring the very students at the heart of their widening participation policies," Callender said.

Like many critics of top-up fees, Callender especially resents the fact that universities will be allowed for the first time to charge different tuitions depending on the perceived value of their programs. Creating a competitive market for higher education risks further dividing people by class and income, critics say. Almost two thirds of students surveyed said they would have gone to a different university if their first choice charged tuition of \$5,520, and 72 percent of low- and middle-income parents said that, given the choice between two universities with different fees, their children were likely to choose the cheaper. "In an ideal world they should pick the best institution they can get into," rather than the cheapest, Callender said.

Points like these drove much of the political opposition to top-up fees. Already facing intense criticism of his decision to go to war in Iraq, Prime Minister Tony Blair postponed the vote from early December until January, concerned he didn't have the votes to pass the idea and mindful that, if he lost, he faced the prospect of a full-scale vote of no confidence. When the roll call ended in January and the smoke cleared, many of his own party members had bolted, but Blair still won by the razor-thin margin of 316 to 311.

An alternative measure that would have increased income taxes on the highest-earning Britons also was proposed, but raising taxes to pay for universities was considered politically unpalatable in a country where people hold mixed feelings toward higher education. "There's no doubt about it that in Britain, higher education is not a popular thing," said Ian Gibson, a Labor MP who opposed Blair. "Most people haven't been in it, and they think it's for the snotty kids. People are more concerned about transport, hospitals and other things. We don't talk about class in this country, but this is about class."

Even though it was difficult to push through, raising students' share of university costs was less politically risky. Only 39 percent of students voted in the last election, a far smaller proportion than in the population at large (a good thing for Blair, considering that support among students for his Labor party has dropped to a four-year low). Still, Blair is widely expected by political observers to face a backlash from middle-class parents after the new tuition



**Gillian Slater, vice chancellor of Bournemouth University, fears the new policy will lead to only the very rich attending "top universities."**

PHOTOS BY DAVID LEVENSON, BLACK STAR FOR CROSSTALK

system takes effect.

On the university side, the lobbying was dominated by the so-called Russell Group of universities, the elite schools including Oxford and Cambridge that had the most to gain from allowing tuition to be set at different levels.

Still, the outcome of the decision was in

**Less than one percent of the gross domestic product goes to higher education in the U.K., compared to 2.7 percent in the United States.**

question until the vote. Seventy-two of his fellow Labor party ministers voted against Blair, one of the biggest political revolts by members of a prime minister's own party in more than 50 years. As for the intensity of the debate, "I guess it's because people have always had higher education for free in this country," said Gibson.

The comparison with the American system was a prominent part of the discussion. The *Guardian* newspaper asked critically: "Crudely put, are English universities to go down the American path or not?" Opponents imported Robert Reich, Bill Clinton's labor secretary and now a professor of social and economic policy at Brandeis University, to say that market forces had "corrupted" U.S. higher education and widened social divisions.

Yet by April, when opponents includ-

**continued next page**



**Claire Callender, professor of social policy at London South Bank University, thinks the new policy mimics the worst aspects of the U.S. approach to financing higher education.**

*from preceding page*

ing Gibson offered an amendment that would have allowed universities to increase their tuition to a slightly lower \$4,600 a year, and not to vary it, Blair's margin had widened. That proposal was defeated, 316 to 288, and Gibson was derided publicly as "a bad loser" by fellow Laborite Barry Sheerman.

Gibson's own anger still simmers. In the end, he said, "supporters had to be

***"Even after this plan takes effect, the universities will still be underfunded."***

**—BEN BRINDED, CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION**

mollified and mollified and mollified as the proposal seemed headed to defeat. When you look at the money coming in (to the universities), it's hardly anything. Tony Blair made the variable fee thing his job, or else."

This leads to the next controversy: Now that the precedent has been set, will universities try to raise their tuition beyond the new \$5,520 limit? As another of its concessions to win votes, the government at the last minute promised that the universities would not be allowed to raise their prices without parliamentary approval. Skepticism runs rampant. "It's definitely a helpful gesture by the government, but this is a government that said it wasn't going to introduce top-up fees in the first place," pointed out Gillian Slater, vice chancellor of Bournemouth University in the south of England, one of a small number of university officials who broke ranks and publicly raised objections to elements of the top-up fee plan.

Slater thinks top universities will soon begin to charge some \$18,400 to \$27,600 a year, making it possible for only the very rich to attend—or the very poor on full scholarships. "Once we concede the principal of variable fees, then the pressure to raise that cap will be very strong indeed," she said.

Bournemouth, whose tidy campus sits at the edge of a quiet seaside retirement community, expects to charge the full \$5,520 when the new fees take effect. That will add between \$9.2 million and \$11 million to a budget of about \$120 million—not a particularly substantial increase. And, said Slater, "It is certainly going to cost quite a lot in the administering."

About 1,300 of Bournemouth's 15,000 students are foreign, a proportion Slater said adds an important measure of diversity in an era of globalization. But non-EU foreign students also pay much higher tuition, something U.K. universities are already eyeing as they look for more ways to make up their persistent budget shortfalls. About 130 foreign students produce as much revenue as more than 1,300 U.K. and EU students.

"I'm always wary when vice chancellors start speaking of trying to become global institutions when they're talking about student numbers," said Ben Brin-

ded, the student president at Cambridge, which has 3,500 foreign students. "It's important that we attract a foreign student population, but what I would be very wary of is a quota."

Of course, it sounded like a quota when Oxford, in a memo that was leaked to a newspaper, instructed its admissions officers to cut the number of British students accepted by one percent a year over the next five years so it could increase the number of higher-paying foreign students. The number of non-EU students at British universities overall has already grown by nearly 50 percent over the last six years, compared to a 15 percent increase in the number of British undergraduates.

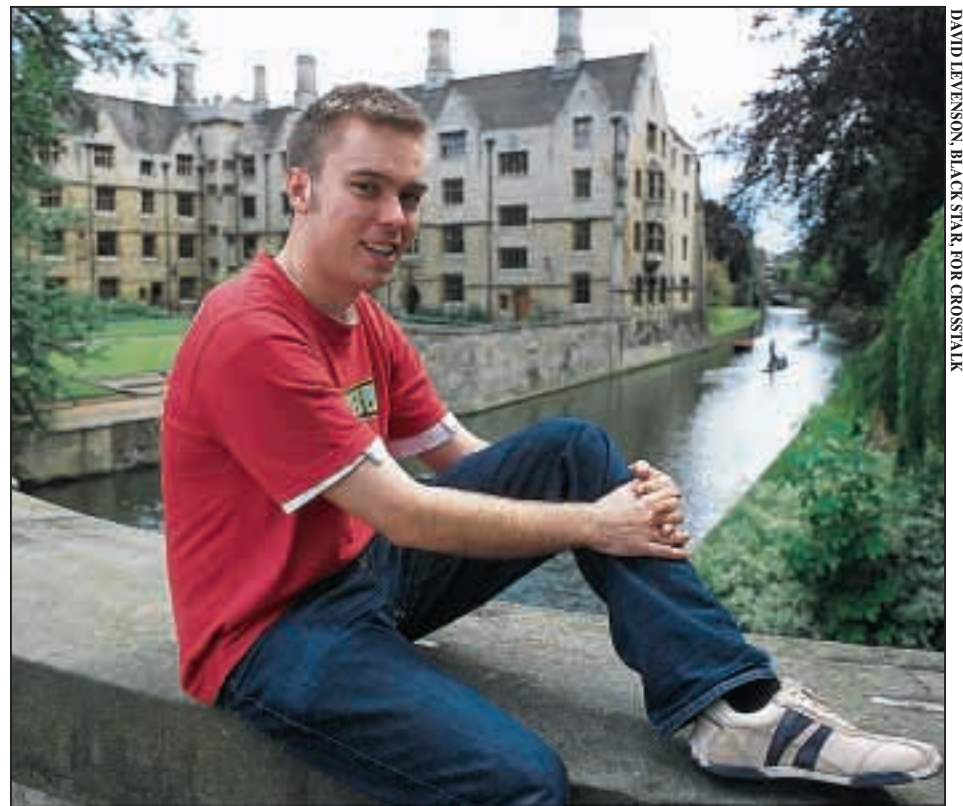
Like foreign student tuition, the tuition paid by graduate students is also not regulated by the government. Oxford plans to increase its graduate student enrollment by two percent a year, which means that graduate students would outnumber undergraduates there by 2016. University College London has announced that it will increase the proportion of graduate students from 37 percent to 50 percent and increase the proportion of students from outside the EU from 21 percent to 25 percent. Graduate students already outnumber undergraduates at the London School of Economics by nearly two to one.

The government's plan to keep an eye on the economic and racial diversity of students is called the Office for Fair Access (OFFA), also known as the regulator. But its role remains vague, drawing still more criticism. After the vote, it was revealed that OFFA would have to share the Bristol headquarters of another higher education organization and borrow its staff. "My reading of the situation is that the universities don't want it to have power," said Brinded. "For any regulator to have power, it needs to have teeth." And as one parliamentary critic of the regulator said, OFFA has "fewer teeth than a Glasgow granny."

Nor can middle-income families count on help from OFFA, said Slater, the vice chancellor at Bournemouth, where a third of the students come from the middle classes. "I don't think we're going to know what that office is going to do. I can't see it keeping an eye on the children of middle England," she said with an arched brow. "That's not fashionable, is it?"

Universities are readying themselves to compete in an open market. Most say they will likely charge the full \$5,520, resisting the impulse to attract students based on price. Some say their alumni, regarding it as a referendum on the value of their degrees, have pressured them to charge the full amount.

Most schools will compete not on the basis of price, but by dangling financial aid and other perks before the most desirable students. One has considered offering free laptop computers and sports club memberships. Others are taking a more subtle approach. "We do have to compete for students now, but we regard the fact that our graduates go out to employment with good salaries as probably the selling point when they're assessing the value of what they're getting for their investment," said Slater.



DAVID LEVENSON/BLACK STAR FOR CROSSTALK

***Ben Brinded, president of the Cambridge University student union, thinks "the universities will still be underfunded" when the new tuition policy takes effect.***

Now fresh concern is arising that the value of university degrees may not justify the increased cost to students. Political economists Phillip Brown of Cardiff University and Anthony Hesketh of Lancaster University raised the prospect of a "graduate glut," contending that the government, in its drive to increase university participation, has overestimated the demand for university-educated workers.

Brown and Hesketh reported that starting salaries for U.K. university graduates have actually fallen. One newspaper pointed out with irony that millionaire entrepreneur Richard Branson and soccer star David Beckham never went to college—and that, in Britain, plumbers earn more than many university graduates.

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service and the Council for Industry and Higher Education have already scrambled to publish the first brochure

***By one estimate, top-up fees combined with increases in the cost of living could boost average student debt at graduation to more than \$62,000 by 2010.***

designed to convince students that a university education is worth the money. Called "The Value of Higher Education," it promises its young readers that going to college will bring personal as well as financial rewards. That is part of a wider philosophical conversation provoked by the ongoing transformation of British higher education.

Behind a black door a few feet down the street from Brinded's student union office is Cambridge's Department of Anglo Saxon, Norse and Celtic, a program that enrolls just 24 students. "What

happens to courses like that?" he asks. The top-up fees plan "furthers the perception that attending university is a financial investment. It is for some people, but not for everyone. A lot of people go to Cambridge and go and work as bankers in the city. But a lot of people go and work for charities. Universities have other roles: They make societies more tolerant, more successful. One of the problems with this bill is it doesn't recognize that. There's a debate that has to happen about the merits of the universities and what they're here for, and we haven't had that debate."

Callender, too, resents what she calls the "totally utilitarian approach. Does that mean we should only have departments that teach knowledge that's useful? It's deeply sad if that happens, if the only thing I'm doing when I'm sitting here teaching is preparing my students for the labor market."

She is convinced that, after 2010, the \$5,520 cap will be lifted, opening the way for university tuition to go higher still. "Some universities will go to the wall, and there will be a more differentiated higher education system along class and ethnic lines. Elitism will be reinforced. Both social class and disadvantage will be reinforced by these divisions between institutions and between students." Slater, too, thinks a small group of universities will begin to charge American-level tuitions, while "a significant number" of other universities will be in trouble. The government has gone on notice that unpopular universities and subjects cannot count on being bailed out by taxpayers.

What will happen now, said MP Ian Gibson, is that "the rich kids will go to the richer universities. It will be like Harvard and Yale. What it's going to do is bring in a market—like you have in the States." ♦

*Jon Marcus, editor of Boston Magazine, also covers U.S. higher education for The Times of London.*