El Paso’s Border Students
INS searches have slowed northbound commute across the Rio Grande to a crawl

By Kathy Witkowsky

El Paso, Texas

SEVEN A.M. on a clear November morning along the Texas-Mexico border, and the sun is lighting up the rugged Franklin Mountains that wedge into the city of El Paso. As usual, 18-year-old Laura Montes is stuck in northbound traffic on the Bridge of the Americas.

Montes points to a woman applying lipstick in the rearview mirror of a Chevy Malibu one lane over. “Can you see that girl? You see that a lot.”

These days, Montes has a lot of opportunity to watch people. Judging from the bright orange Fronterizo (border) license plates on the cars surrounding Montes, it’s a good bet that most of the people she is observing are Mexican residents commuting from their homes in Juarez across the Rio Grande. They may be on their way to work, to shop, to visit family, or, like Montes, to attend school in El Paso, where she is a freshman at the University of Texas.

Graduate student Veronica Encinas is one of 1,750 Mexican students who cross the border to attend the University of Texas at El Paso.

From the air, Juarez and El Paso appear as one sprawling city with a narrow stretch of river that flows through it, and their economies and cultures have long been intertwined.

Arizona's border students make up ten percent of the university’s enrollment, and 14 percent of all Mexican college students studying in the U.S. Seven other Texas colleges on or near the Mexican border offer the same tuition waiver, but UTEP’s is by far the largest program of its type, and its acronym is no accident: Pase, pronounced PA-say, is a Spanish word meaning “pass”—as if to say, “come in.”

The program addresses the importance of educating not just U.S. citizens, but all residents of the struggling region, said Diana.

Special Report

“Early Colleges” Innovative institutions attempt to reshape the transition from high school to college

By Ron Feemster

New York City

Eugene Voightman moved here from Ecuador less than two years ago. A 15-year-old high school student with limited English skills at the time, he is doing college work at LaGuardia Community College in Queens today.

In the next few years, scores of new early colleges are expected to open around the country. All are attempting to foster a smoother and quicker passage to higher education. Many, modeled on the new programs at LaGuardia, aim to catapult students directly into college who entered high school at risk of dropping out.

Voightman did not skip a grade or test out of any high school classes. He became a part-time college student when International

In a Special Report (pages 1A–12A), National CrossTalk looks at the early impact of the higher education budget cuts that have affected almost every state. As state support declines, public colleges and universities are responding by raising tuition, often by ten percent or more, leveling new mandatory fees and, in some cases, reducing student financial assistance.

continued on page 15

continued on page 8
Virginia B. Smith Award

ROBERT F. OLIN, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Alabama, has received the fourth annual Virginia B. Smith Innovative Leadership Award, given jointly by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning and the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. Olin was recognized for his “long-term career commitment to broad-based strategies to improve mathematics education and the use of technology in its instruction,” said Austin Doherty, chairman of the award steering committee.

Olin was a faculty member at Virginia Tech for 25 years before moving to the University of Alabama in 2000. There he founded the Math Technology Learning Center, where a combination of self-paced computer programs and individual tutoring help to eliminate traditional obstacles to undergraduate learning of mathematics.

The award is named for Virginia B. Smith, president emerita of Vassar College and founding director of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. ◆

Robert F. Olin accepts the Virginia B. Smith Award.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Injustice at Bennington

Editor—A Bennington student, quoted in your article, “On Its Own Terms” (National CrossTalk, Summer 2002), says: “I think it’s better to lose good teachers than to only have mediocre teachers.” To anyone with an ear, that shouldn’t make much sense. Why would you sacrifice quality to avoid mediocrity? Yet her confusion seems apt. Bennington fired brilliant, inspiring teachers—the best I ever had, after a year at the college before and after its restructuring, plus two more years at Vassar College—and put in their place some okay ones.

If the school has improved by now, so be it. Ends do not justify means. Elizabeth Coleman, with no respect for academic freedom or due process, fired nearly one-third of Bennington’s faculty in 1994 as part of her plan. Were they a threat to the College? Or were they a threat to Ms. Coleman? Your author, Kathy Witkowsky, should have asked those questions.

President Coleman devastated the lives of so many excellent teachers who had devoted so much to Bennington College. It was an injustice. And any article that fails to address that injustice has contributed to it in some small way.

Douglas Faneuil
Brooklyn, New York

Corrections

In the fall issue, former Washington Governor Daniel J. Evans was incorrectly identified as a Democrat, while former Governor Booth Gardner was misidentified as a Republican. Gardner is a Democrat, Evans a Republican.

In Carl Irving’s article about Virginia’s higher education budget problems, also in the fall issue, the University of Virginia’s endowment is said to be $1.4 billion but is, in fact, $1.7 billion.

A photo caption accompanying the same article places economist Robert Archibald at the University of Virginia, but he is a professor of economics at the College of William and Mary.

Finally, another caption quotes Michael J. Smith, president of the University of Virginia academic senate, expressing “deep dismay about the state of private support for higher education” in the state. Professor Smith’s dismay was about the lack of “public,” not “private,” support.

“Certainly. A party of four at seven-thirty in the name of Dr. Jennings. May I ask whether that is an actual medical degree or merely a Ph.D.?”
Winning Formula
Emory University’s student-athletes emphasize academics over athletics
By Don Campbell

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

T WAS 112 YEARS AGO that Warren A. Candler, a Methodist bishop who served as president of Emory College and chancellor of its successor, Emory University, offered one of his many clairvoyant remarks about why institutions of higher learning should avoid big-time sports.

Intercollegiate athletics, Candler declared, “is evil, only evil, and that continually.” He added: “The next thing you know, the coaches will be making more money than the (college) president.”

Candler’s prescience may have sounded a bit radical at the time, but it was actually conservative. Football and basketball coaches at major universities today routinely make three or four times as much money as the president. Bishop Candler might turn over in his grave if he knew that one football coach—Oklahoma’s Bob Stoops—makes more money each year than the $2.3 million that Emory spends on its entire athletics budget. That budget covers athletics, physical education and recreation, including salaries and fringe benefits for coaches in 18 men’s and women’s sports.

As the commercialization and quasi-professionalization of college football and basketball continues unabated, Candler’s beloved Emory University steadfastly refused to embrace football and gives basketball about as much attention as tennis.

Professionalization of college football and women’s sports.

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But perhaps the greatest source of pride to Emory coaches and students alike is another statistic that did not make the newspapers: Seventeen of the school’s 18 athletic teams had grade point averages higher than that of the student body at large. That is no small accomplishment at a school where the average undergraduate GPA is 3.25, and the incoming freshman class averaged 1330 on the SAT.

In the scramble for recognition and revenues that football and basketball bring in the era of television, the headlines about university athletics in recent years have tended to be negative: Numerous colleges are placed on probation for illegal recruiting practices; a Baptist university president is given a $600,000 severance package after admitting that he ordered school officials to ignore an F in calculating a basketball star’s grade point average; another university cancels baseball and men’s swimming so it can give raises to its football and men’s basketball coaches.

In the midst of these and other troubling stories, a national commission funded by the Knight Foundation has recommended that universities be barred from postseason play if fewer than half their athletes graduate.

At the 11,300-student Emory campus in the wooded hills east of downtown Atlanta, surrounded by football-crazy members of the Southeastern and Atlantic Coast conferences, the kind of win-at-all-cost philosophy that gets so many colleges in trouble seems as alien as a tribute to General Sherman. President William Chace, who describes big-time sports as the “third rail” for university presidents, provides the context: “We are gratified and influenced the Emory philosophy on big-time athletics.”

Indeed, it’s hard to appreciate Emory’s unusual role today without learning about the attitudes that shaped the institution long ago.

For nearly 50 years after its founding in 1836 as Emory College in the little Georgia town of Oxford, the school had no organized athletics.

baseball team came to Emory’s campus to play a game, the trustees decided that there would be no more intercollegiate sports—on campus or off campus. That policy stayed in effect until 1946.

But there is more to the story than that. Candler was an avid supporter of physical education and intramural and club athletics, and all three remain a major focus of Emory life more than a century later.

Because of the Candler family’s business history, it’s worth noting the long relationship between Emory and the Coca-Cola Company. Although there’s no modern-day evidence that Coke has tried to influence the Emory philosophy on big-time sports, it certainly did in the early days. Asa Point, where they engaged a team from the University of Georgia before what was described as a “large crowd.”

The Emory nine came out on the losing end, 12-1, and there were subsequent hints in the campus newspaper that some gambling on the game might have taken place. These hints reached the ears of the school’s board of trustees, and when the board met in June, it declared that Emory athletes could no longer travel off campus to play baseball “or any other intercollegiate sport.” (Baseball was the only sport then being played.)

Five years later, in 1891, after Georgia’s baseball team came to Emory’s campus to play a game, the trustees decided that there would be no more intercollegiate sports—on campus or off campus. That policy stayed in effect until 1946.

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From preceding page

Griggs Candler, who, like his brother Warren Candler, was a critic of intercollegiate sports, was an Atlanta pharmacist who became owner of Coca-Cola in 1891. In 1905 he donated $1 million to make possible the eventual transformation of Emory College into Emory University. Asa Candler also served on the Emory board of trustees.

In 1919, Coca-Cola was sold to a group of investors headed by Ernest Woodruff, whose son Robert became president and chairman. In 1979, Robert and his brother George Woodruff made a gift of $105 million to Emory. In 1983, Emory's new physical education center was named for George Woodruff. In 1994, Emory named its business school in honor of Roberto Goizueta, chairman and CEO of Coke.

At the 11,300-student Emory campus in the wooded hills east of downtown Atlanta, the kind of win-at-all-cost philosophy that gets so many colleges in trouble seems as alien as a tribute to General Sherman.

Emory swim teams are usually strong last year both men's and women's teams placed third in the country among Division III schools.

“the only way you can go is up.” He subscribed to the Emory philosophy of pushing physical education and intramural sports, but also believed that it was unbecoming to expect teams to come to Emory and not reciprocate. So in 1946, the intercollegiate travel ban was lifted.

From the 1940s to the early 1980s sports such as soccer and cross-country for women were added. There were periodic demands from the students, primarily for basketball. Partin, who had succeeded McDonough as athletics director in 1967, set the stage for a burst of growth by successfully pushing for construction of a new 185,000-square-foot state-of-the-art physical education center on campus. It included an aquatic center that was the envy of the NCAA's Division III.

Gerald Lowrey, who succeeded Partin as athletics director when the new center opened in 1983, recalls the struggle. “We had seven teams, most of them glorified intramural teams,” he said. “The swim team was so bad I had to schedule a lifeguard when they were practicing. I was afraid they would not be able to get all the swimmers out of the pool safely. We were bad.”

From that base, Lowrey, who is now the Emory alumni association's senior director for campus relations, added ten teams in the next seven years, including men’s and women’s basketball, baseball and women’s soccer—teams, he notes, that had a little more “spectator appeal.”

Lowrey, who was succeeded in 1990 by Chuck Gordon, the current athletics director, said the rapid increase in the quantity and quality of Emory’s athletics program was accomplished by adhering to a basic philosophy: “We don’t bring in athletes to play. We bring in students of top quality who then want to be involved in athletics, rather than the other way around, and we’ve been successful at that, even as it gets harder and harder as we get more competition.”

There were also external influences that made Emory’s stance more easily maintained and defended. In the early ‘80s, several urban research universities whose leaders were concerned about the growing emphasis on college sports began to discuss the possibility of creating a formal athletic association within Division III. It would be based on academic similarities instead of athletic comparisons. Out of those talks came the University Athletic Association.

UAA members include, in addition to Emory, Brandeis University, Carnegie Mellon University, Case Western Reserve University, New York University, the University of Chicago, the University of Rochester and Washington University in St. Louis. They subscribe to three basic assumptions:

- Student-athletes are just that—students first and athletes second;
- Excellence is not to be confused with a “win-at-all-costs attitude”;
- Athletic programs are not considered income centers, nor are they public entertainment.

UAA schools compete in a wide range of sports, from swimming to soccer to baseball. But only five of the eight schools compete in football: Carnegie-Mellon, Case Western Reserve, Chicago, Rochester and Washington University. They do not play Division I opponents.

Being a Division III university also reinforces the Emory philosophy because it means the school cannot offer athletic scholarships. Thus, applicants know that they can’t count on their athletic skills to get them the “free ride” they might be offered at a Division I school.

The gender-equity requirements of Title IX also have served to support Emory’s history of promoting a wide variety of team sports on an equal footing for men and women. With the introduction of fast-pitch softball for women in the 1990s, Emory achieved gender parity in team sports, but the objective had already been pushed in the 1980s by Lowrey, “I hired women’s coaches at the same salaries as for men, and spent the same budgets on women’s teams as men’s,” he said. “And even though people told me I couldn’t do it, I just did it. I thought it was the fair and reasonable thing to do.”

Today, Chuck Gordon estimates that, under Title IX, the introduction of football and some 85 to 90 male players would mean that Emory would have to add 100 to 110 female athletes because of the gender ratio of the undergraduate student body, which is 56 percent female. “We’d probably need five or six new women’s sports, new locker rooms, new training rooms, new weight rooms, additional staff—not to mention a football stadium and other facilities.”

This is a powerful argument for the status quo, one that appeals to Emory’s 347 varsity athletes in other sports. “You get the chance to be the big dog here, whether it’s swimming or soccer or tennis,” said Gordon. “Whereas, if you have football, it drives the perception of the program, good or bad, based on the success of the football team, regardless of how other teams do.”

“The interest (in football) at Emory comes primarily from the students, who have an idea of what college life is supposed to be like from watching television and talking with their friends from other places—and to a very limited degree from a small number of staff, faculty and some alumni,” said Lowrey.

“What they’re looking for is the Division I experience, and to do that, all the sports programs would have to go to Division I and the budget support would be vastly different,” Lowrey added. “We’d need different kinds of coaches. What we have today are long-time faculty members who also coach. They are here for years and years—we don’t have much turnover—and that is a tremendous asset for students who come back and want to see their former coach. It’s part of the beauty of the system we have at Emory that we don’t run though coaches like Kleenex, like they do at some schools where, if they have a losing season, they’re out.”

But while the Emory model is appealing, it presents challenges to coaches who are competing with the elites of Division I academically but have no athletic scholarships to offer, and often do not come close to matching the merit or financial aid offered by those schools.

Swim coach Jon Howell, who leads one of Emory’s most successful athletic programs, describes the trials and tribulations of the annual recruiting process. Casting “a wide net,” he mails Emory information to as many as 10,000 high school students.
each year, with the expectation that perhaps 3,000 will reply and a third of those will look as if they might make it through the admissions process. The next step is to let the potential applicants know what the mission is at Emory and to see, in Howell’s words, “if they’re interested in contributing to that mission, if it’s something that really piques their interest.”

The final part of the process, which tends to come at the 11th hour, involves financial aid. After the students find out if they are admitted or rejected by Emory, they get a financial aid package offer, and then they have to decide whether they can afford it. The total cost of attending Emory this year is $34,000, of which $26,600 is for tuition and fees.

“Often, every year, we have kids who want to come, and it’s their first choice, but it’s not a choice that works out for them financially,” lamented Howell, who served as assistant swim coach at Division I Clemson before coming to Emory. At Clemson, Howell said, “you knew that if you offered someone a full athletic scholarship, you’d end up getting them.”

Emory is limited even further in terms of what it can do to recruit. “We don’t fly in anyone or split bus tickets or do anything like that, even though it’s permissible under Division III rules,” said athletics director Gordon. “We figure if you really want to look at Emory, you’ll figure out a way to get here. That’s a different approach that occasionally may cost us a kid or two.

“When you look at it academically, there’s a thin slice that we can actually recruit, of high school seniors who are athletes,” added Gordon. “Because we’re not going to dip no matter how good an athlete you are; we’re not going to fudge on financial aid; we’re not matching your package from somewhere else; we’re not negotiating aid here. So our slice is pretty thin, but we’re doing pretty well with that slice.”

The no-nonsense emphasis on academics resonates well with Emory’s student-athletes, but it makes for demanding schedules.

“You have to really manage your time or you’ll not succeed here,” said Claire Lederman, a senior international studies major from Cleveland who captains the women’s swim team. A typical day, said the three-time All-American Lederman, begins at 6 a.m. and includes four hours of swim practice, two hours of classes and five to six hours of studying. Some athletes tutor their teammates in courses they’ve already taken.

Men’s swim team captain David Hiler, a senior psychology major and pre-med student from Houston, said he chose Emory because of its academic reputation and its location. His other option was Duke, but Hiler said swimmers at Duke are overshadowed by the basketball team. That is not a problem at Emory, where a swim meet may draw as many fans as a basketball game.

“One of the real unique features to Emory is that swimming is one of the big sports,” said coach Howell. “Swimmers are a very respected group on campus... so you don’t have to play second class to football or basketball or some of the traditional revenue sports. For tennis and softball and swimming and some of the other successful sports on campus, that’s a role that’s really unique to Emory.”

There are usually caveats to every success story, and in Emory’s case it’s the long-running debate about “school spirit.”

How can a major university in a large urban area have school spirit when it doesn’t have the experience of football Saturdays in the fall and a packed basketball arena in the winter?

Administrators, coaches and students alike put the best face on it, usually by arguing that it is easy to ignore something you’ve never had.

“There’s definitely a social stigma to not having football,” said swim captain Hiler. “I don’t mind, because we’re the focus. Big football would be a distraction. But you always hear it as a freshman here. I don’t miss it because I never had it.”

“We are what we are,” observed Gordon, the athletics director. “There are kids who want to go to football games in the fall, and want to sit in line and camp out for basketball tickets. And we don’t get those kids.”

William Chace, Emory’s president, raised some eyebrows a few years ago when he was quoted as saying that “if the students want football, we’ll give it to them.” Asked recently if he really meant it, or was just being facetious, Chace replied with a chuckle: “I didn’t worry about the reaction because it was an empty challenge. And nobody took it up.”

Indeed, a common theme on campus is that Emory is unlikely to ever have football, move up to Division I or change its status in any way because her older sister was on the Emory swim team.

Swim team member Karryn O’Connor, a sophomore economics major from Andover, Massachusetts, said Emory is “pretty stingy on aid.” In fact, she said, she was encouraged by her high school counselor not to apply at Emory because of the school’s reputation in that area. She came anyway because her older sister was on the Emory swim team and liked it.

Gordon acknowledges that as Emory continues to “ratchet up” its academic profile, it will become more difficult to compete with the Ivy League schools and others that are more willing to increase financial aid.

“It’s sometimes three, four, five thousand dollars more for a kid to come to Emory than to go to Penn (the University of Pennsylvania),” said Gordon. “That’s a pretty tough decision to make around the dinner table in April. A $20,000 difference over four years is a semester abroad, or a car. So if we don’t react with some packaging issues, it’s going to be harder here. And once it gets too hard, it’ll be interesting to see if the top coaches stay.”

The “packaging issues” that Gordon refers to revolve around Emory’s policy on financial aid. According to Joanne Brzinski, associate dean of academic affairs, Emory is in a “difficult position competitively” with a lot of top schools, and not just because it does not offer athletic scholarships. Emory continues to offer financial aid strictly on the basis of need.

“Our approach is to treat all applicants the same, both the highly desirable students and the not so highly desirable students,” Brzinski said. This means that while some other schools may provide up to 100 percent of financial aid for students they really want, Emory doesn’t make such distinctions. About 73 percent of Emory undergraduates receive some level of financial aid.

However, next year Emory will attempt to improve its position on merit-based aid by moving back from November to April the decision on such aid. Because the decision on merit aid is now made early in the application process, Emory has been unable to match offers made by other schools later in the process. Beginning next year, the school will experiment with making merit aid of up to $5,000 available in April. Brzinski said $5,000 “may not be enough,” and that the school may have to increase the figure.

Concerns about aid aside, Chace, who is leaving the presidency soon to return to teaching, is sanguine. He says Emory will never join Division I, and that he suspects a lot of other university presidents are envious of the Emory approach. “There is no change on the horizon here,” he declared.

“If you run the clock ahead 50 years,” said Gerald Lowrey, the former athletics director, “there are going to be a lot more schools doing it this way, because you eliminate a lot of ethical dilemmas, like the things you read about college presidents fudging the rules to keep athletes. Here, all that goes out the window. Here, it’s academics first and athletics as a complement.”

No less an expert than William C. Friday, co-chair of the Knight Foundation’s Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, agrees with Lowrey. Friday, president emeritus of North Carolina’s university system, said the reason is as simple as one word: money. With the continuing “arms race” to build bigger and more expensive college sports arenas, he said, “the financial balloon eventually will collapse of its own weight.”

Don Campbell is a freelance writer and a lecturer in journalism at Emory University.
**Community College Baccalaureates**

Some critics decry the trend as “mission creep”

By Kay Mills

**St. Petersburg, Florida**

F rom OUTSIDE, the portable buildings on St. Petersburg College’s Clearwater campus look like any others that house a new program awaiting construction of its permanent home. But inside these trailer-like buildings are state-of-the-art classrooms for the community college’s venture into a baccalaureate degree program in technology management. At least seven community colleges across the country are now offering bachelor’s degrees, fueling debate over how that expansion alters the mission of these schools.

The St. Petersburg-Tampa area along the west coast of the Florida peninsula has many high-tech firms. College officials say these companies are seeking people who not only know computers and software but who also can move into management, especially of nurses and teachers.

“Not everyone agrees with these moves by schools that were established to offer two-year, Associate of Arts degree programs or various training certificates. For these colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees is a ridiculous waste of resources, and we don’t have that many resources,” said James Wattenbarger, professor emeritus of education at the University of Florida. Such programs take community colleges away from doing what they do well and move them into an arena in which they will offer “second-class baccalaureates,” he added.

Wattenbarger, who helped to develop the long-range plan for Florida community colleges, then was their state director from the mid-1950s to mid-1960s when they expanded from 4,000 to 300,000 students, feels that “personal ambition and political decisions” are the driving force behind the shift. The history of higher education is replete with examples of this mission creep, he said. “We started with small finishing schools, then two-year normal schools, then the normal schools became state teachers colleges, the state teachers colleges became state colleges and the state colleges became state universities.”

Attract to these institutions and their boards is the service to the community, and whatever the community needs. “That’s the mission” of the colleges, Taylor said. Nevertheless, he has misgivings about any wholesale move of community colleges into baccalaureate degrees. “The concept of four-year degree programs is very seductive,” he said, adding that academicians respect, “even envy,” the status attributed to higher degrees, so community college officials may well be attracted to offering them.

But governing boards must ask what the community needs and what its resources are. No one else gets up in the morning worrying about the things which community colleges deal—everything from remedial courses to lifelong education and workforce development, Taylor said, adding that there are numerous other opportunities to bring four-year degrees to students.

George Boggs, president of the American Association of Community Colleges, considers this a “controversial issue” within the community college world. His organization includes members that give baccalaureate degrees and those that do not, and it has taken no position on the question. Part of the debate centers around doubts that university schools of education can meet the demand for more teachers in some areas of the country, Boggs said. Some states also have poor transfer policies between community colleges and universities, and some universities are reluctant to offer courses at convenient times for students or to offer applied baccalaureate degrees.

“If a community college is not successful in working with the university community to develop the kinds of agreements that allow students to enroll in baccalaureate programs, I think it is legitimate for the community college to offer degrees in those areas that are needed,” said Boggs. “However,” he added, “I urge caution on the part of community college leaders and encourage them to first try to develop transfer agreements.”

Boggs wants to protect the mission of community colleges, which, as he sees it, centers on helping students in a variety of ways—with tutorial and remedial programs, smaller class sizes in the freshman and sophomore years than they might have at universities, and a focus on teaching rather than on research and publication. Community colleges are also willing to take risks and provide open access to people of all ages, ethnicities and levels of preparation. “I don’t see those same values in other areas of higher education,” Boggs said. “I am afraid that if we start looking too much like them, we’ll lose those values.”

St. Petersburg’s Kuttler said he has looked at every warning and has tried to turn it into a strength for his school’s baccalaureate programs. For example, critics said the college would use its lower-division faculty for the new programs and that they would not be as good as university faculty. “First of all, teaching is our strong point,” Kuttler said, adding that every faculty member hired for these four-year programs has a doctorate.

Critics also worried that giving its own baccalaureates would cut into programs St. Petersburg already offered with University of South Florida and 11 other area public and private colleges through the University Partnership Center at two SPC campuses. The center enrolls some 3,000 students. Kuttler said that he and the president of USF, Judy Genshaft, consulted before St. Petersburg establishes new programs “so there are no dogfights.” Besides, he added, “the teaching and nursing shortage is so bad, it wouldn’t matter if there was a little competition.”

Pinellas County, stretching from Tarpon Springs in the north to St. Petersburg in the south, and from the Gulf of Mexico to Tampa Bay, is the state’s most densely populated area, and yet it is least served by baccalaureate degree programs, Kuttler said. “Who is getting hurt (by these new programs)?” he asked. “Seventy percent of our students are women.” By offering bachelor programs closer to their homes, Kuttler added, “we’ve provided women who would never have had a chance to get the degree that opportunity.”

The county ranks fifth in the state in the number of people who receive associate’s degrees, but “a whole lot of people just stay home” afterward, said Thomas Furlong, senior vice president for baccalaureate programs and university partnerships. Overall, Florida ranks 47th in the nation in the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded, adjusted for population variation, according to a report done for the state and based on National Center for Education Statistics data.

Furlong believes that the SPC bachelor’s degree programs further the state’s goal of increasing access to higher education as outlined in the master plan issued in February 1999 by the Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission. To create greater access, Furlong said, Florida is also increasing the number of college courses online, expanding the universities’ branch campuses, and encouraging partnerships between universities and community colleges.

St. Petersburg College enrolled 62,465 students last year, with 31,928 taking courses toward associate’s degrees in arts
Florida ranks 47th in the nation in the number of bachelor's degrees awarded, according to a report based on National Center for Education Statistics data.

or science. It began its upper division programs in August 2002 with more than 450 students in the fall term—87 in education, 65 in nursing, and more than 300 in technology management. The school expects those enrollments to increase for the spring term and again next year as the new programs add a second class of students.

The technology management program is offered at SPC’s Clearwater campus or online. It aims at expanding the horizons of its students, said Shri Goyal, dean of the program and former director of technology management at GTE laboratories in Waltham, Massachusetts. To move into middle management, students working in technology fields need to visualize projects, work in teams instead of in isolation, and learn to make clear presentations. In addition to technical and management courses, students also participate in seminars on topics that may include information security, disaster planning and recovery, and electronic marketing. Goyal said.

The new bachelor’s degree program in nursing typically draws nursing students seeking to enhance their opportunities for promotion, higher pay and leadership in the field, said Jean Wortlock, dean of nursing. For others, it is a stepping stone to the master’s degree, with which they would be qualified to teach nursing. Just as there is a shortage of nurses, she said, there will also be a need for instructors because nationwide many nursing faculty members, average age 55, will be retiring in the next decade.

Students take courses ranging from community health nursing theory and aging to professional roles and leadership theory. They are attracted to the courses at St. Petersburg’s campus because they cost about $10 a credit less than at the University of South Florida. The majority of the bachelor’s degree students received

Crosstalk

Continued on page 10

have more people receive bachelor’s degrees and become productive citizens.

The Florida legislature passed Sullivan’s bill, which also dropped “junior” from St. Petersburg College’s name, and Governor Jeb Bush signed it in 2001. The legislature also established a procedure for other schools to apply for programs deemed necessary in their areas.

“It’s amazing to me that more community colleges have not stepped forward to take advantage of the opportunity to apply for granting four-year degrees,” said Sullivan. He indicated that the colleges may not want to jeopardize any cooperative agreements they have with state universities.

Harold H. Heller, chief executive officer and vice president for the USF St. Petersburg campus from 1992 until last summer, is now professor of special education there. He pointed out that until a few years ago, “USF-St. Pete” offered only upper division courses and now is a four-year campus. “So we kind of moved into territory that [St. Petersburg College] had been sole owner of.” St. Petersburg College in turn had long been concerned about better serving students in the north part of Pinellas County who were seeking baccalaureate degrees.

If the rationale for SPC offering baccalaureate degrees in education, for example, is need for the programs, Heller said, that could be justified for students who could not commute from the northern end of the county to USF or pay the higher USF tuition. But if the issue is capacity, “it already exists—we have plenty of capacity.” The education program at USF St. Petersburg could take 100 to 150 more students, he said.

Sullivan. He indicated that the colleges may not want to jeopardize any cooperative agreements they have with state universities.

It’s being done now though the side door, through personal diplomacy, Arsenault said. “It shouldn’t depend on whom you know in the state senate” but rather on public dialog, so that people understand the differences between various institutions and the changes being made in those institutions.

James Wattenberger agreed with Arsenault, pointing out that the state decided some years ago not to create that middle tier. State universities should not ignore the shortage of nurses and teachers, he added. “There is no reason for community colleges to take this on. It sounds like rationalization more than anything else.”

Last year, three other Florida community colleges asked the state to allow them to offer several baccalaureate degrees. Chipola Junior College in Marianna, a rural area in the Florida panhandle (nursing, secondary education and business administration); Edison Community College in Fort Myers (public services management and computer technology); and giant Miami-Dade Community College (several education degrees).

The Council for Education Policy, Research and Improvement—formerly the Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission—advised against approving these degree programs. William B. Proctor, the agency’s executive director, said, for example, that existing teacher education programs in the Miami area had capacity that should be used. But the Florida Board of Education, the decision-making agency, voted in May 2002 to allow Miami-Dade to offer bachelor’s degrees in secondary and special education, because it felt the need for teachers in its area was so great. Edison was encouraged to work with Florida Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers, and Chipola with Florida State University in Tallahassee and other
EARLY COLLEGES from page 1

extra help with English. Without it, they might not have survived in one of New York’s mammoth public high schools. At International, where catching up in English is part of every student’s program, learning a new language and culture has never been considered a handicap or disadvantage. If anything, students there seem to be more confident and ambitious than elsewhere. “I like to put myself in hard things,” said Guzman, a quiet young man who plans to become a medical doctor in the United States and eventually a politician in Ecuador. “I can save time and money if I get the AA degree now.”

Middle College High, which also has a high immigrant population, recruits stu-

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, one of the early funders of Bard High School Early College, has donated $40 million to launch 70 new early college high schools.

dents who have had difficulties in the public school system. Some have lost a year to illness, to family strife, or to trips back and forth between the U.S. and their native countries. More have simply lost their way in a complicated, anonymous system that serves 1.1 million students.

Both high schools are small—about 500 students each—and they have used their location on the community college campus to foster an adult atmosphere of responsibility and opportunity. Students at both institutions have always had the option to take college classes during high school. This has kept talented students moving forward at International, in particular, where immigrants are often a year or two ahead in mathematics or computer science even as they are behind in English. At Middle College, the mere presence of older, successful students has provided motivation.

Sylvester Rodriguez, a 17-year-old raised on the gritty south side of Williamsburg, a poor neighborhood in Brooklyn, is surprised by the ambition he has developed since ninth grade. Many of his neighborhood friends left school without a diploma, and he admits to choosing Middle College because the school gives students the afternoon off on Wednesdays, and because its assessment system, based on portfolio performance, makes it exempt from the New York State Regents exams, which most of the state’s high school seniors must take.

Instead of choosing the easy way through high school, he is now joining Excel, even though he will be in school until 5:15 pm every day and must take his share of college-level exams.

“My teachers told me I can do this,” said Rodriguez, the only son of a Puerto Rican single mother who brought him to New York as an infant. “If they give me the help I need, I’ll do what I have to do. If I’m going to high school an extra year, that’s okay. I’m doing something for myself. I want to get my associate’s degree.”

The group of Excel students are attending high school as usual in the morning for the next two years and making their first forays into higher education in the afternoon. They enter the community college as a cohort and register for the same core classes. Last fall, for example, they took English 099, a prep course for the community college writing exam, and Theater Arts.

These are regular sections of community college courses taught by community college instructors. High school and college students are intermingled. “Having college students in the same classroom is important,” said Bert Rosenberg, principal of International High. “Our students’ attitude and behavior is more mature when they are mixed in.”

High school guidance counselors offer an additional seminar class to help students adjust to college. The seminar provides extra time to discuss work in the college classes, as well as a chance to talk about the differences between community college and high school. Not until their final year, when students design an individual program leading to an associate’s degree, do they attend classes alone in the general population of the community college. But even then, the support services provided by the high school remain in place.

“Some students may be used to an environment that offers them second chances to get their work done,” said David Grolsky, a social studies teacher at Middle College who is mentoring Excel students. “One of the biggest hurdles they face is dealing with new expectations. The college environment assumes you are an adult. There are consequences if you don’t meet your deadlines.”

Each student in the Excel program took LaGuardia’s college reading course over the summer to prepare them for community college classes. All but three passed the test. Rosenberg and Aaron Listhaus, principal at Middle College High, are optimistic about these students’ chances when they retake the test this semester. But repeated failures would create a problem with the cohort structure of the class. Either students will drop back a year, or they may have to leave the program, Rosenberg said.

Faced with the social reality of attending high school with people who are no longer teenagers, Excel students discover a new motivation: pride. Few want to be identified as high school students by the community college. “The kids want to start out viewed as regular college students,” said Grolsky. “So the assumption is not that you are younger or ‘not as good’ as the others. Let the professors be pleasantly surprised.”

A liberal arts public school

Across the East River in Manhattan, an early college with roots in a different tradition of higher education effects a more abrupt transition to higher education. At Bard High School Early College, near the East Village, high school as we now know it ends after tenth grade. At this year-old public school, which moved from temporary quarters in Brooklyn last fall, 11th graders are not juniors, ready to concentrate on the college admissions process. They are known as “year-ones.” Instead of lecture classes, they take mostly seminar-style courses with sixteen or fewer students. They plunge into calculus, art history, comparative literature and law, working with faculty who were teaching at colleges before they came to Bard.

As at Middle College and International High, graduates receive not only a high school diploma, but also an associate’s degree, which enables them to enter a typical four-year college as juniors. Unlike those schools, Bard is a four-year program, with the final two years of full-time college courses leading to an associate’s degree.

Bard, whose 500 students are housed in a former elementary school, was launched as a cooperative project between Bard College, a liberal arts school in Annan
dale-on-Hudson, New York, and the New York City Board of Education. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation provided nearly $1 million in startup funding.

The urban high school might not exist today if Leon Botstein, the president of Bard College had not pushed to buy Simon’s Rock Early College in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, in 1979. But in contrast to Simon’s Rock, an idyllic retreat where gifted 15- and 16-year-olds begin a four-year liberal arts program, the New York City school aims not to supplant the late high school years but to transform them. Instead of recruiting students who can do college work now, the faculty seeks to groom an ethnically diverse crop of ninth graders, not all of whom come from the top of their middle school classes, into young college students. And instead of accelerating or “advancing,” in the spirit of high school ad

Bard High School Early College aims for the intensity, rigor and self-discipline of higher education, two years ahead of schedule.
Tom Vander Ark directs education programs for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which will spend $40 million to start new early colleges.

Ray Peterson, principal at Bard High School Early College, says many ninth graders lack the “habits of mind to study” required of students in the accelerated program.

The school managed to retain all but five members of the 2001 year-one class. “That was the recruiting class we were most careful with,” Peterson said. “We took chances on quite a few ninth graders and it didn’t always work out. Some didn’t have the habits of mind to study. We asked them to leave.” The school is not just looking for raw academic talent. They want students who can grow into self-directed individuals who see learning as the primary focus of high school.

At the same time, the school is sensitive to diversity issues. “We don’t want the student body to skew too white,” said Peterson, who noted that the city high schools requiring rigorous admissions exams tend to enroll disproportionate numbers of Jewish and Asian students. Five students interviewed by National CrossTalk—all of them white—discovered Bard when they were investigating Simon’s Rock as a boarding school. That school charges upwards of $35,000 per year. Bard is a free public high school.

Older students, the ones who enter as year-ones at about the age of 16, tend to come to Bard because they want a new challenge. “Here I have to actually think,” said Joseph Robateau, now 17, a year-two student who left an accelerated cohort of 50 students at Brooklyn Technical, one of New York City’s three most selective public high schools, to enter Bard when it opened. “There are no wrong answers here if you can argue your point. At Tech we had blocked classes with more work than other students, more math, and math labs. But we really just took tests about the teachers’ ideas. You could figure out what they wanted. So you did that sometimes instead of figuring out what you thought yourself.”

Of course, getting a jump on college is an added attraction. For Liz Dempsey, 18, who was attending Convent of the Sacred Heart, a private girls school on Manhattan’s tony Upper East Side, there were financial incentives as well. “My family saved four years of tuition,” she said. “Two years in high school and two years in college.” Even so, her decision to transfer had more to do with finding a new style of school. “Junior and senior year were just going to be about competing for good grades in Advanced Placement courses,” said Dempsey, who parlayed a year of Chinese language at Bard into a three-week fellowship to China last summer. “It sounds like a cliché, but we spend a lot of time here working together to find an answer. We trust each other enough as colleagues and peers to talk about opinions.”

Ashli Haynes, a 17-year-old actress and violinist, left the Professional Performing Arts School to find more challenging academics. “People were distracting and rowdy in class,” she said. “They came to that school to be whatever fabulous thing they were trying to be. They didn’t care about the rest of the work.” Haynes is taking calculus, Spanish, law, chemistry and jazz ensemble in addition to the required year-one seminar. At the end of the first year of college last spring, when Bard was at its former location in Brooklyn, students in calculus class worked on expressing trigonometric functions as power functions. Meanwhile, a year-one seminar was comparing Hamlet and Don Giovanni, and an art history class was locating the techniques and subject matter of Monet and Renoir in the technological changes of 19th century France. This year, the school is expanding its music program with the help of the American Symphony Orchestra, which is donating funds to purchase musical instruments for the school’s chamber orchestra and jazz ensemble.

Teachers in most college courses at Bard High School Early College hold doctoral degrees. They spend the first year or two getting certified as high school teachers by the state. Bard has found it necessary to supplement some teachers’ salaries to recruit them from university positions.

With all of its emphasis on academics, Bard attracts students looking for identity and affirmation as well as a more rigorous classroom experience. Nyla Rock, 17, who transferred from A. Philip Randolph High School in Harlem, said her former school was too large and too crowded. Almost any student transferring to International High or Middle College could have told that part of her story.

Equally important, she said, was the fact that the learning process was passive and anonymous. “We had 25 or 35 people in every class,” said Rock, who founded Bard’s literary club and is planning to attend a selective women’s college like Wellesley or Sarah Lawrence or Smith. “You couldn’t just speak up if you had an idea. Here my smallest class had five students.”

More early colleges

As much as the schools differ from one another, Bard, Middle College and International High School are all part of a common quest to reshape the transition to college, which often seems to waste most of the senior year of high school. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, one of the early funders of Bard High School Early College, has donated $40 million to launch 70 new early college high schools across the country.

Most of these schools will aim to serve students more like those at Middle College than at Bard, but organizers of the new schools have been regular visitors to the Bard and LaGuardia campuses. “We see these schools as a way of bridging the gap to higher education,” said Tom Vander Ark, executive director of the foundation’s education program. “In effect, we want to bring higher education to people that could be left behind—students whose parents may not have graduated from high school, much less attended college.”

The funding is being funneled through intermediaries that differ from one another as dramatically as Bard and International High. They will all be mandated to serve at-risk students, but the schools will be as different as their locations and the communities they serve: Indian reservations in Washington state; inner cities of Cleveland and Washington, DC; rural areas in Utah and the south; and mainstream college campuses across the country. The “intermediate” with the most experience starting early colleges is the Middle College Consortium, an organization of high schools that, like Middle College and International, are located on community college campuses.

Cecelia Cunningham, the head of the consortium, was principal of Middle College High School at LaGuardia until Lischutz took over last fall. She expects the conversion of some two dozen middle colleges into early colleges to reawaken a perception of them as advanced placement programs, a view she plans to fight. “I don’t really care how people look at these schools,” she says. “I’m going to keep them focused on the same type of students.”

Other intermediaries express different values. Antioch University in Seattle, for example, plans to start at least eight schools for Native Americans in the state of Washington. And for Linda Campbell, an Antioch professor who chairs First People’s Education at Antioch and heads up the early college project there, the new schools represent an opportunity to bring more Native American teaching and learning into the classroom. This curricular change, Campbell believes, will do as much to keep students in school as increasing...
from preceding page

academic support programs.

Two intermediaries focus on preparing teachers to offer a richer learning environment for students. SECEM (formerly called the Southeastern Consortium for Minority in Engineering) is starting eight schools as partnerships between local school districts and historical black colleges. The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation plans to start early colleges on a "representative cross section" of college campuses across the country. At both organizations, in keeping with their traditional strengths, they will aim at deepening teachers' ties to their disciplines. "If 16-year-olds are ready for college, then what holds them back is the mode of instruction," said Robert Weisbuch, Wilson's president. "We need exceptional teachers to raise the norm of instruction." In Utah, the new schools fill a need created by the state's New Century scholarship program, which provides a 75 percent tuition scholarship at any state university to students who finish high school with an associate's degree. A student who completes the AA degree at the age of 17 could graduate from college at 19. Nathan Pierce, an official with the Utah Partnership Foundation, which is starting early schools for the degrees they sought. Florida State University and Chipola decided that FSU would offer the nursing and business degrees at Chipola's campus, and Chipola would give the secondary education degree. Chipola is the only post-secondary education institution in a large rural district of northwest Florida, said Kitty Myers, dean of baccalaureate and university center programs. More than half of Chipola's graduates do not continue their education because financial, family or job constraints prevent them from commuting or moving to a university, Myers added.

Chipola will offer the secondary education degree with majors in math, biology, chemistry and physics in fall 2003. Myers said that the bachelor's degree nursing program, previously offered entirely online, has been strengthened this year because two FSU faculty now come to Chipola to work with the students, who previously had had little contact with faculty and no mentoring.

Myers, herself a math professor with a Ph.D from Florida State, hopes to dispel "that snobby or disdain people have for programs at community colleges. Community colleges should be able to show that they have good programs. You can't recreate a university, nor should you want to," she added. "But you can create one program that's the same as at a university—in some ways better because you have smaller class sizes." Miami-Dade will offer degrees in exceptional student education and secondary math and science education starting next August. It hopes to increase the number of teachers who are African American, Hispanic or other minorities, said Leslie Roberts, director of the School of Education. This year Edison Community College and Florida Gulf Coast University are collaborating so that students can take courses toward public service management and computer technology baccalaureate degrees on Edison's campus. The public services management course aims at providing advancement opportunities for people in law enforcement, firefighters and those in other public safety fields. Elsewhere, some community colleges, like St. Petersburg, changed their names once they started offering bachelor's degrees. Among them is Great Basin College in Elko, Nevada, the northeastern part of the state and far from any universities. It graduated its first class of 18 elementary education majors with baccalaureate degrees in May 2001 and another 15 last May. Great Basin now also offers bachelor's degrees in integrative and professional studies (which Betty Elliott, vice president for academic affairs, describes as a multidisciplinary field similar to liberal arts) and in applied science. In that area, students who have associate's degrees in technical fields that allow them to work in the mining industry return to classes to learn management and human relations skills.

The University of Arkansas-Fort Smith illustrates another way a community college can evolve. As Westark Community College, the school established a center in 1989 through which the University of Arkansas, Arkansas State University and several others offered baccalaureate degrees in such fields as early childhood education and computer science. By 1998, the college started its own bachelor's degree program in manufacturing management to meet a local economic need, said chancellor Joel Stubblefield. The school, which merged with the University of Arkansas in January 2002, still offers one-year technical certificates and associate's degrees.

"Part of our merger agreement was that we don’t throw out what we’ve done well at the two-year level. We are not trying to do everything A to Z," Stubblefield said, adding: "Mission creep would be a mistake for our school."

There is even a Community College Baccalaureate Association now, headquartered in Fort Myers, Florida. Established in 1999, it currently has about 80 members, most of them community colleges. CCBA's president, Edison Community College president Kenneth Walker, said the group believes that by offering bachelor's degrees, community colleges can address the three major issues that face higher education today: demand, access and cost. Former Miami-Dade Community College president Robert McCabe sees both the downside and the upside in this debate. The downside is that the academic side of the house creates the agenda to the detriment of community colleges' role in providing job skills and opportunities for low-income students; the upside is that community colleges have traditionally been "more friendly, interesting and supportive places" for minority students. That is particularly important as states try to train more minorities as teachers, added McCabe, now a senior fellow at the League for Innovation.

"But once you start, what happens if all 28 community college districts (in the state) end up wanting to offer baccalaureates? There are not the resources to do that," McCabe said. "Six or seven in the state would probably be enough."◆

Former Los Angeles Times editorial writer Kay Mills is the author of four books, including one on the federal Head Start program.
By Robert M. O'Neil

I N THE FRIGHTENING DAYS that followed the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the academic community was rife with apocalyptic prospects. One troubled professor analogized the potential hazards for academic freedom to the worst assaults of the past: “Today [the threat] is the September 11 attacks and terrorism. In the ’50s it was McCarthyism. In the ’20s it was the Red Menace.” The Chronicle of Higher Education, normally guarded in its assessment, reported soon after the attacks that faculty members “across the country have found their freedom to speak out hemmed in by incensed students, alumni and university officials.”

Such a scenario might well have, but in fact did not, play out in the ensuing months. Conditions some 17 months after the terrorist attacks are not necessarily better than what the pessimists feared, but they are markedly different from the dire predictions in those early weeks. Direct assaults on faculty status and academic freedom, for example, have been remarkably few, though one persistent case remains deeply troubling. Several invitations to controversial campus visitors were rescinded for reasons related to the attacks, though in the most visible such incident—that of an Irish poet invited to lecture at Harvard—the rescission was quickly withdrawn.

The anticipated student protests did materialize, but with themes quite remote from the forecasts. Instead of rallying on college campuses to protest a possible war in Iraq, much less to indict government curbs on free inquiry, the most volatile demonstrations in recent weeks have celebrated victories, or lamented defeats, on the football field. The intensity of such events, and the resulting damage to property, reached levels unknown at most institutions of higher learning since the infamous raids and riots of the 1960s. Anti-war protest has, by contrast, targeted mainly off-campus sites, such as military recruiting stations and civic centers.

Even where the actual course of events has followed a predictable path, the actual impact of September 11 is surprisingly hard to assess even after almost a year and a half. Certain provisions of the USA Patriot Act, and of laws and edicts that curb activities of foreign students or regulate sensitive research, are of deep and understandable concern to the academic community. Yet the direct impact of such measures remains remarkably difficult to quantify, partly because the responsible government agencies have seldom been forced to disclose the kinds of data that would normally permit an accounting of the consequences. Even more troubling has been the inchoate nature of the rules and regulations in many areas, where administrators and investigators still have to guess where the impact will ultimately fall.

The past year has been a time of testing for faculty academic freedom, though not primarily because of September 11. As a useful reminder that life goes on, the agendas of many outspoken faculty remain unrelated to terrorism. There have been, for example, threats to dismiss Dr. Moshe Gai, a controversial (and allegedly uncollegial) physicist at the University of Connecticut, and legislative outrage directed in Missouri at Dr. Harris Mirkin, who last spring was reviled as an alleged apostate for pedophilia.

Most recently, faculty at Texas A&M were startled when, in early December, the regents significantly diluted the value of tenure, confining its scope essentially to a professor’s salary, and leaving most other facets of faculty status legally unprotected. Such events have little, if any, relationship to the war against terrorism.

The one faculty personnel case that does relate directly to September 11 is troubling enough to offset its novelty. In the waning days of 2001, Professor Sami Al-Arian learned that his tenured position at the University of South Florida was at risk, when the trustees urged the president to dismiss him. Al-Arian, a teacher of computer science at USF for nearly two decades, had once made a speech in which (in Arabic) he proclaimed “Death to Israel.” Soon after September 11, he appeared on a Fox News broadcast, identified on the air as a USF professor, and acknowledged certain links to suspected terrorists. The trustees cited immediate student, parent, alumni and community concerns as the basis for targeting Al-Arian’s faculty status. He was suspended with pay, placing him in a limbo where he remains to this day.

As the new academic year opened in late August, President Judy Genshaft informed the campus community of a radically new strategy. The university had just filed suit in state court against Al-Arian, seeking a declaration that he could be fired without abridging his free speech or academic freedom. (He has said that, if dismissed from his tenured position, he would sue the institution.) The president’s announcement added that the case against Al-Arian had been substantially bolstered, with the legal complaint detailing “the actions [on his part] that have undermined the orderly and effective functioning of the University.”

Suing an embattled faculty member is unusual, though not quite unique. In the early 1970s Southern Illinois University went to court seeking judicial vindication of its claimed need to dismiss tenured faculty for fiscal reasons. The current case is, however, apparently the first time such a suit has been filed when a faculty member’s individual activities and expression have triggered the institution’s animus.

Soon after receiving the complaint, Al-Arian’s lawyer had the case removed to a federal court, noting that important constitutional issues were implicated. He also sought to dismiss the suit, claiming not only that it lacked legal merit, but also that under the faculty collective bargaining agreement any such dispute should go to arbitration and not to court. In mid December the federal district judge dismissed the case, observing that so long as arbitration was available to the parties, the university’s plea for judicial intervention sought to “fast forward past the final step in the dispute-resolution process.” She added, somewhat disparagingly, that “the court system was not designed to dispense such advice” but rather to resolve real cases and controversies. Thus the dispute returns to the USF campus.

The continuing viability of Al-Arian’s case is hardly surprising, given its roots in a university’s concern about the presence on its faculty of a scholar linked to terrorist activity. The absence of similar cases elsewhere might suggest that conditions at USF are unique. Or it may be that universities with comparably serious concerns are simply awaiting the outcome of the legal battle in Florida. It seems most likely, however, that other institutions potentially worried about faculty activists of Arab ancestry recognize that academic freedom almost certainly protects other Al-Arians, however controversial and even contentious they may be.

Faculty tenure is not absolute, to be sure. But the clearest precept of academic common law is that a tenured or continuing professor may not be dismissed without proof of derections that “directly and substantially impair” his or her membership in the academic community. Whatever transgressions have been attributed to professor Al-Arian seem to fall far short of that appropriately rigorous standard.

If challenges to tenured faculty have been remarkably few, the same cannot readily be said of visiting lecturers. To be sure, there are some bright spots—among them, the refusal of Colorado College and the University of Colorado at Boulder to cancel a scheduled appearance by Palestinian activist and adviser Hanan Ashrawi, even though a prominent state legislator charged that her appearance would be “a totally inappropriate slap in the face to the memory of all who have died and suffered as a result of 9/11.” Nor did the University of Michigan accede to Jewish student pressure to cancel a conference of the Palestinian Solidarity Movement even though a battery of Muslim/Arab speakers, including professor Sami Al-Arian himself, might provoke disruption. (Indeed, university attorneys successfully resisted an eleven hour suit asking a Michigan state judge to bar the conference.) Nor did the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill rescind its plans for a mid-November Islamic Awareness Week, even under threat of litigation, and despite an unbalanced roster of Arab speakers and visitors.

Harvard’s ambivalence about an outspoken Irish poet may have yielded the best of lessons. Tom Paulin had been invited by the English department to give the annual Morris Gray poetry lecture. His hosts learned in mid November that Paulin had, some months earlier, expressed to an Egyptian reporter his belief that “Brooklyn-born Jews” who had settled in the West Bank “should be shot dead,” and had added, “I think they are Nazis, racists; I feel nothing but hatred for them.” He had earlier published a poem which called Israeli soldiers a “Zionist SS.” A sense of outrage greeted these revelations, and led to the withdrawal of the Paulin invitation. A few days later, however, as a result of intense pres...
A number of actions recently taken by Congress and the executive branch potentially affect academic research and scientific inquiry, and may also imperil academic freedom.

Dickinson College created a website called “Teaching 9/11” as a resource or compendium, augmented by the shared experience of other institutions.

Fewer than five percent of this year’s matriculants reported that their choice of campus reflected in any significant way the impact of September 11.

And inquiry since September 11. This subject remains largely a work in progress. What we do know is that a number of actions taken recently by Congress and the executive branch do potentially affect academic research and scientific inquiry, and may also imperil academic freedom. Certain provisions of the USA Patriot Act, for example, have inescapable implications for the scope and conduct of research. Much the same could be said of tighter controls on exports of information as well as materials.

The Homeland Security legislation and the Total Awareness Program, among other measures adopted during the fall, markedly expand the potential scope of government’s information-gathering capacity. New rules announced in mid December will require registration and more tightly controlled access by institutions that possess potentially dangerous biological agents and pathogens for research purposes. The actual or planned removal from government websites and other databases of information valuable to researchers (in the social as well as the physical sciences) portends a shrinking of the resources available for scholarship.

Simply because so many of these policies remain to be implemented and applied, no accurate or detailed catalogue is yet possible—and may not be possible even a year hence. Moreover, some tightening of research policies in recent months may not be primarily driven by the terrorist attacks; certain visible new federal constraints may (noted the Chronicle of Higher Education) “also stem from lapses within the Department of Energy’s national laboratories in recent years.” Finally, and quite understandably, there is far less than unanimity within the academic community on the degree to which the terrorist attacks and the nation’s response do jeopardize freedom of inquiry.

While many of the more ominous measures remain largely speculative at this stage, a few trends seem to have some clarity. University research administrators report, for example, that the number of government contracts containing restrictive clauses seems to be steadily increasing. One type of constraint that has evoked concern imposes limits upon, or even bars participation of, non-U.S. citizens, while also demanding that the grantee institution submit “employment eligibility documentation” for foreign researchers, even those working on unclassified projects.

Also troubling in recent experience has been a rise in the number of defense-related contracts that require submission for pre-publication review of documents that contain information from Army-financed, unclassified contracts; universities must allow 60 days for Department of Defense review of the proposed publication or disclosure, during which period DOD can oppose the release. Under some such provisions, DOD approval is required before such research data can be posted on electronic bulletin boards, passed over unsecured e-mail systems, or placed on the Internet. While we do not yet have hard data on the frequency of such curbs, there is at least reliably anecdotal evidence that they have been imposed much more often and more freely than was the case before September 2001.

While we await greater clarity and harder information in such areas as these, one matter seems to be nearing an earlier resolution. The academic community has closely followed and monitored the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), a new approach to the monitoring and reporting of most international students enrolled at U.S. campuses. Some welcome relief has recently come in the form of an extension of the first reporting date to August 1, 2003 (postponed from a potentially much earlier deadline which universities with large numbers of foreign students would have been hard pressed to meet).

The new system obligates institutions to gather and report substantially more information than was earlier the case—for example, practical experience that foreign students gain in their fields of study, and related work experience not only during the student period but for as much as a year thereafter. These rules apply only to those visitors who hold student visas; the potentially far more complex status of foreign scholars and researchers (whose visas come from the State Department) remains for another day.

As we await greater clarity on the precise scope of the new policies, the academic community and those who advise it risk serious overreaction. Science editor and former Stanford University President Donald Kennedy noted in a recent editorial that response to ambiguity in the export controls “can reach silly extremes...Editors of some journals have been advised by attorneys that under current interpretations...they may receive manuscripts from banned countries but may not supply editorial advice or guidance because that constitutes ‘providing a service.’”

Similarly overreacting, an organization of scholars publishers recently warned its members that, if asked for “business records” regarding journal or book purchases under section 215 of the USA Patriot Act, they could not even notify their attorneys—a stark example of what Kennedy calls “bad advice.” Indeed, there is mounting concern that one of the enemies we have met is ourselves.

A final question one might ask about the status of research and inquiry after September 2001 is: “What do we know and when will we know it?” In late November, the Justice Department agreed by mid January to tell the American Civil Liberties Union (which had brought suit demanding such information) what data it would release about the exercise of powers newly conferred by the USA Patriot Act. Among the ACLU requests was the number of times libraries and bookstores had been asked for lists of books that had been borrowed or bought by particular persons. Such information would have potential import
There is mounting concern that one of the enemies we have met is ourselves.

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Flailing Grades

What do we learn from high school exit exams?

By Rebecca Zwick

The release of the latest results of the California High School Exit Exam last fall prompted one Sacramento Bee columnist to ask who was flunking—the students, the schools or the state. Only 32 percent of the students who took the test in 2002 passed the math section, and 54 percent passed the English language arts portion. Most disturbing were the math pass rates for students who were African American (20 percent), Latino (22 percent), socioeconomically disadvantaged (22 percent), or English learners (limited-English-proficiency students) (18 percent).

Will these dismal results lead to immediate instructional innovations or to an infusion of resources targeted to these groups? That seems unlikely. Instead, many are predicting that the State Board of Education will simply postpone the requirement that students must pass the test to graduate. The state board has already taken actions to minimize the effects of the test. In December 2000, the board voted to shorten the exit exam and to eliminate some difficult algebra questions, after a field test yielded grim results. And in June 2001, the board set the minimum passing scores lower than recommended by a panel of teachers, parents and community members.

All of which leads to a fundamental question: Why give high school exit examinations in the first place?

High school exit exams have had a resurgence in popularity as part of the “accountability” movement that has swept the country in the last decade. Twenty-four states now require the administration of these exams, and 15 are already using them to regulate graduation. Yet even as exit exams are becoming more prevalent, their role is growing muddier as the policies governing them are recast by state boards of education, politicians, courts and special-interest groups.

Are the exams meant to serve primarily as a quality control mechanism for high schools, or are they intended to determine how well each student’s performance stacks up relative to a common set of standards? Or, as a third possibility, is the goal to measure every student’s academic performance, even if this requires modifying the test—or implicitly, the standards—for some individuals? All these purposes are legitimate, but each has a different set of implications for test design, administration and interpretation. And without some clear thinking about what exit exams are intended to accomplish, states may well end up with tests that are not ideal for any of these purposes.

Let’s examine each of these three possible objectives in turn.

1) Provide school-level quality control.

According to an August 2002 report from the Center on Education Policy, an independent organization based in Washington, DC, a central goal of high school exit exams is “to spur a general improvement of public education.” The tests are viewed as “a form of quality assurance, especially when they are tied to challenging state standards for what students should know and be able to do.” But, surprisingly as it may seem, high school exit exams aren’t necessarily tied to high-school-level standards. And if the goal is school-level quality control, the way these tests are being administered is extremely inefficient.

First of all, consider the test content. Of the 24 states now requiring exit exams, ten give tests that focus on content below the high school level, according to the Center on Education Policy. And sometimes, the level of the test varies by subject. On California’s exit exam, for example, the language arts portion assesses state standards through the tenth-grade level, but the math portion only covers standards for grades six and seven, plus Algebra 1, according to the California Department of Education.

In addition, the degree to which exit exams are truly standards-based is called into question by the actions of states that allow pass rates to affect the test content or the minimum passing scores. In a standards-based test, the necessity of mastering certain material, not the success rate, should determine what score is needed to pass.

And if the primary intention is to evaluate the quality of education at the school level...
and to ensure that schools are teaching the material included in state standards, then it would be far more efficient to arrange for anonymous random samples of students to take the exam than to test all students. (See “Standards for the Standards Movement: Do high school exit exams measure up?” National CrossTalk, Fall 2000.) Savings would be large, both in terms of dollars and classroom hours.

2) Provide certification that individual students meet specific standards.

Another goal of high school exit exams, according to the Center on Education Policy report, is “to make a diploma ‘mean something’—namely, that its holder has the knowledge and skills needed to do well in a job, college, and other aspects of daily life.” Under this interpretation, administering a high school graduation test provides for a form of certification. Those who have passed the test can be assumed to have certain specific skills in language, math, and sometimes other areas. But tests that focus on sub-high-school content, as both the exit exams in ten states do, certainly can’t provide an endorsement that students have career or college skills. To serve that function, states would need to develop a test blueprint that spelled out the proficiencies needed for college and career success, and to design a test based on this framework.

Furthermore, if exit exams are to be uniformly regarded as certification tests, they must assess the same skills for all test-takers. And, as we explore in the next section, some of the policies that have evolved for administering these tests to special populations aren’t consistent with this criterion.

3) Assess all students, incorporating test modifications as needed.

The Center on Education Policy report says that by 2008, 22 of the 24 states requiring exit exams expect to offer accommodations for students with disabilities, nine will offer alternative assessments, and five will offer exemptions from the exam requirement.

The California Department of Education lists on its website the various alterations of exit exam procedures that are to be permitted for students with appropriately documented disabilities. These alterations are divided into two categories: “Accommodations,” which are assumed not to change the test in any fundamental way, are usually uncontroversial. They include the provision of large-print or Braille versions of the test, and audio or oral presentation of the math section. “Modifications,” which are acknowledged to change what is being measured, include the “audio or oral presentation of the English language arts part of the test,” the use of spellcheckers on the writing items, and the use of calculators on the math section.

In the case of “modified” tests, the State Board of Education has the power to decide whether a passing score warrants a high school diploma. According to an evaluation report prepared by the Human Resources Research Organization, about two percent of the students taking the math portion of the California High School Exit Exam in 2002—about 4,500 students—were permitted to use calculators, including about 900 students who had no documented disability whatever.

The policy on accommodations and modifications in California stems from a lawsuit that was filed in 2001 on behalf of special education students. As a result of the suit, U.S. District Judge Charles R. Breyer issued a preliminary injunction in February 2002 that barred administration of California’s exit exam under existing policies. To proceed without a policy change, he said, would “violate rights guaranteed to learning disabled students under federal law” to “participate meaningfully in the assessment.” Exclusion from the exam, along with the potential denial of a diploma could cause “harm to a student’s dignity and educational prospects.”

According to Judge Breyer, “the fact that some of these students are incapable of mastering the content of the exam is of no importance; they are still entitled to a valid assessment of their capabilities.” The judge’s decision stated that learning-disabled students must be granted the testing accommodations and modifications listed in their existing individual educational plans (“IEPs” or “504 Plans”).

So is it a good thing to allow calculators and spellcheckers for students with learning disabilities, even though these devices fundamentally alter the exam? Certainly, a strong case can be made for doing so. First, the chance to be included in the assessment preserves the dignity of test-takers with disabilities, as Judge Breyer asserted. But it is more than a question of dignity. Inclusion in the assessment also allows these students, along with their parents and teachers, to obtain information about their academic performance, regardless of whether their scores are comparable to those of other test-takers and regardless of whether they are likely to pass the test. And if they take the test on more than one occasion under the same conditions, the test results can also provide information about their progress over time.

But if tests are to be individualized in ways that clearly alter the nature of the skills that are being assessed, test score users such as colleges and employers should be made aware of the conditions under which the test was administered. If a student used a calculator to pass the test, the score user shouldn’t be misled into regarding the passing score as a certification of the ability to do the math problems without a calculator.

And those monitoring school, district or state progress must also be aware of any substantial alterations of testing procedure. Scores resulting from modified administrations should not be aggregated with scores obtained from standard administrations. To allow the scores from modified administrations to stand without providing information about the testing conditions could render the entire testing effort meaningless, and could create incentives for students to be labeled as having a disability. Illegitimate claims of learning disabilities are particularly problematic because, as a 1997 National Academy of Sciences report noted, one district’s “learning disabled” student is another district’s “low achiever.”

An advantage of notifying all parties of the assessment conditions is that it opens up the possibility of further increasing the flexibility of the testing process. As long as test users are informed of testing conditions, and scores from modified administrations are not aggregated with other scores in reporting results, the testing process can be individualized to meet the needs of each student.

Attempts to shoehorn children with vastly different needs into the same modified testing session can then be abandoned. The price of this increased individualization is that for some students, the test will not serve a certification function because passage of the test will not have the same meaning as it does for the majority.

As states are rapidly discovering, the development of a successful graduation testing program is a complex venture that is fraught with technical and political pitfalls.

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BORDER
from page 1

Laura Natalicio, president of UTEP: “It was a recognition that the Texas border economy was dependent on Mexico’s development,” she said.

“There are some people who probably believe that Texas public education is (exclusively) for Texas,” Natalicio said. But Natalicio is not one of them. “The only answer to economic development is education. And that applies in Mexico as much as it applies on the U.S. side,” she said. The educational investment appears to be paying off, at least in terms of graduation rates: Of UTEP’s international students (most of whom were Mexican) who were first-time full-time freshmen in 1996, 38 percent earned a degree by August 2002, compared to only 25 percent of UTEP’s general population.

UTEP has not actively recruited Mexican students, relying instead on word of mouth to bolster its enrollment. Last year, it gained an educational ally in its southerly neighbor, the Mexican state of Chihuahua, which began offering its residents 50 annual full-tuition scholarships to UTEP for both undergraduates (one-year scholarships) and graduate students (up to two years).

State policy clearly favors binationalism. But ever since the September 2001 terrorist attacks, the federal government has tried to ensure that passing into the U.S. isn’t as easy as it used to be. Before the attacks inspectors searched only about three percent of vehicles, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service tried to keep waits under 20 minutes; now inspectors are under orders to search each and every vehicle, and northbound waits on the four bridges linking the two cities run anywhere from 30 to 90 minutes, down from two to three hours in the weeks immediately following the attacks. “Honestly, we don’t have a benchmark right now,” said INS spokesperson Leticia Zamarripa. “But we do look closely if wait times go over 90 minutes.”

The security crackdowns have drastically changed life here, and they have potential implications both for the area in general and UTEP in particular. “People don’t grasp the notion of a binational community,” said Charles Ambler, dean of the UTEP graduate school. That ignorance is more than just an academic concern, because the school—and the border economy—are vulnerable to new INS rules. Said Ambler: “The whole question of how national sovereignty and security is going to be pursued is going to be of critical importance to us.”

From the air, Juarez and El Paso appear as one sprawling city with a narrow stretch of river, the Rio Grande, that flows through it, and their economies and cultures have long been intertwined. “You have 150 years of history of people interacting very informally on both sides,” said Jon Amastae, director of UTEP’s Center for Inter-American Border Studies. During the past couple of decades, that relationship gradually has become more tense as authorities sought to crack down on illegal immigration and drug smuggling. But the aftermath of the September 2001 attacks, Amastae said, “has been the biggest shock to that system.”

Traditionally, Juarez residents have crossed to El Paso to purchase gas, appliances and clothes; inhabitants of El Paso favor Juarez for good Mexican restaurants and discos. There are personal reasons to cross as well: Many families have relatives living on both sides of the border.

And goods are crossing the border as well—many of them assembled at the nearly 300 plants, known as maquiladores, that have become a mainstay of the Juarez economy. Nearly all of the products assembled in Juarez are exported to El Paso, where they are warehoused, then trucked or sent by rail to other destinations. There also is a tremendous amount of drug smuggling, a fact that is tacitly acknowledged but not much discussed.

It still takes only 15 minutes, and costs a quarter, to walk from downtown El Paso over the toll bridge to Juarez. But getting back across is far more time-consuming. It still takes only 15 minutes, and costs a quarter, to walk from downtown El Paso over the toll bridge to Juarez, and on any given day, throngs of people, often laden with shopping bags, do so. But getting back across—either on foot or by car—is far more time-consuming. Many people have reacted to the increased delays by cutting back on their cross-border sojourns: The INS has reported that, within the El Paso district, 30 percent fewer vehicles entered the U.S. this year than last.

Administrators at UTEP expected they would see a similar trend. Much to their surprise and delight, enrollment of Mexican nationals, which had been on a steady upward trend, increased again this year, by between four and five percent.

“Were shocked,” said Rebeca Suarez, coordinator of UTEP’s English as a Second Language program, which most of the Mexican students need before they can move on to content courses taught in English. “We thought they would be discouraged by the long lines and scrutiny they were going through and they would just say, ‘Forget it.’ But these kids are resilient.”

They are also remarkably patient. Laura Montes, clad in jeans and a sweatshirt and wearing a slacked-back ponytail, passes her time on the bridge by listening to a local rock-music station and watching vendors weave among the idling cars, hawking burritos, chocolate doughnuts, cigarettes and candy to the captive customers. Several grown men roam the lanes with mini-mops, hoping to earn a few pesos by washing windshields; one man wears a sandwich board advertising electronic announcements; a couple of “Dollar Boys,” dressed in bright orange uniforms, function as walking currency exchanges. “I tell people this is like a little market,” said a bemused Montes.

But midway across the bridge, the retail activity abruptly stops: The vendors are no longer welcome north of the border. It is a stark reminder that Montes’ drive to school takes her from one nation to another, from a developing one to the world’s lone superpower. On this particular morning, it took only half an hour before Montes reached the U.S. inspection booth, where an INS inspector gave Montes’ passport, student visa and 1992 Ford Taurus a quick once-over, then waved her on. That’s pretty typical nowadays, she said, as she accelerated out of the checkpoint. She was on campus in plenty of time to hit the computer lab before joining a couple of dozen other students—mostly Mexicans, though a handful are U.S. citizens who were raised in Juarez—in her 8:30 AM English as a Second Language class.

Some of those students said they get up as early as 5 AM to avoid the worst of the traffic if they arrive on campus early, they sleep in the university parking lot or in the student union before class. Others catch a ride to one of the bridges, then walk across—the pedestrian lane generally moves pretty fast—before hopping a public bus to school.

Those who can afford it have forked over about $400 ($120 to the U.S. government; the remainder to the Mexican government) and agreed to an in-depth background check to obtain a pass to the Dedicated Commuter Lane, an express line where the waits, if any, are rarely longer than five or ten minutes. (Not surprisingly, the DCL program tripled after September 2001, to 14,000 users.)

INS and U.S. Customs inspectors working the DCL lane are also reputed to be much friendlier than their counterparts at El Paso’s other ports of entry, because they come to recognize the familiar faces of the DCL commuters. Which is not to say they don’t take their jobs seriously, as a photographer from this publication learned recently, when, unannounced, he tried to accompany a DCL pass-holder across the border.

Both the photographer, Rod Searcey, and the DCL pass-holder, UTEP graduate student Veronica Encinas, were detained for about half an hour while she was sub-
Soto, a freshman who armed with music, books, homework and coffee, leaves her house at 6 AM in order to make it to her 8:30 AM classes. “It’s a beautiful school.”

And it is an unusual one. Although ten percent of UTEP’s 17,000-plus students are Mexican nationals, a whopping 69 percent are Hispanic. Outside the classroom, Spanish is spoken at least as much, if not more than, English, and, in the Mexican tradition, students often greet each other with a kiss on the cheek. The Hispanic influence also is reflected in the conservative fashion: There is not an exposed belly button or pierced eyebrow in sight.

But the dominant architecture is Bhutanese.

The campus’s imposing stone structures with overhanging hip roofs, red brick bands and colorful mandalas are the legacy of Kathleen Worrell, wife of the school’s first dean. She had never been to Bhutan, but in 1914 she read a National Geographic article about the tiny Asian country. Two years later, when the present day UTEP campus was being established as the Texas State School of Mines and Metallurgy, she convinced her husband that Bhutanese-style buildings would fit perfectly in the rugged landscape.

Aside from the architecture, El Paso would seem to have very little in common with Bhutan. But like that isolated Himalayan kingdom, this border region is in many ways a world apart. People from El Paso don’t have a Texas drawl. They rarely eat Tex-Mex food. And in the 2000 presidential election, most of the voters here spurned their own governor, George W. Bush, in favor of his Democratic opponent, Al Gore.

“I don’t think that El Paso or Juarez are really part of Mexico or the United States,” said Hector Mercado, 20, a junior who has dual citizenship. “It’s a fusion of two cities that created their own culture.”

But amid heightened security measures, that culture faces challenges. “We depend for our social and economic health and for future development on a close relationship between El Paso and Juarez and the state of Chihuahua,” said Ambassador, the graduate school dean. “If this kind of relationship and interrelationship is threatened by security measures, that means something more than simply having to wait in line on a bridge. If there are huge lines, will companies invest in Juarez, or will they think it’s easier to go somewhere else?”

Ambler fears that if the companies go, so too, will some of the students.

Ambler suffered through some anxious months last year, when the INS announced that it planned to enforce a rule requiring foreign students to hold a student, or F-1, visa. Since only full-time students qualified for an F-1, that rule essentially outlawed part-time commuter students from Mexico. For years the INS had ignored the rule and allowed part-time students to cross the border with either a border-crossing card or a three-day tourist visa. Suddenly, between 150 and 200 UTEP students found their academic careers at risk. Seventy-seven of them were graduate students, most of whom also held full-time jobs.

“I almost wanted to cry,” said Antonio Dominguez, 32, a mechanical engineer with Delphi Technical Center in Juarez who was in the midst of a master’s program in manufacturing engineering when the INS made its announcement.

Faculty also were upset. Grumbled one UTEP faculty member, who stood to lose half the students in his graduate program. “The same bureaucracy that granted (September 2001 hijacker) Mohammed Atta a visa six months after 9/11 came up with this!”

The INS wound up extending the date it planned to begin enforcing the rule, and in August, part-time students became eligible for F-1 visas. Permanent relief came in October, when Congress passed legislation to create a new category of visas for part-time border students. But the law was not passed soon enough for Dominguez.

Along with half a dozen of his colleagues, he decided to bite the academic bullet: He enrolled in school full-time, even though he also was working full-time and his wife was pregnant (she gave birth in August). “I decided to follow the rules,” said Dominguez, who received his master’s degree in December. “But it’s been tough because I haven’t had any sleep at all.”

It has also been demoralizing. “This was just one big family, the people from the border. Now it’s different. They question everything.”

—UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO STUDENT ANTONIO DOMINGUEZ

leagues, he decided to bite the academic bullet: He enrolled in school full-time, even though he also was working full-time and his wife was pregnant (she gave birth in August). “I decided to follow the rules,” said Dominguez, who received his master’s degree in December. “But it’s been tough because I haven’t had any sleep at all.”

It has also been demoralizing. “This was just one big family, the people from the border. Now it’s different. They question everything,” said Dominguez, who twice was detained at the border while immigration inspectors phoned UTEP to check out his story.

School administrators also are deeply frustrated with new rules requiring them to enter information about all foreign students into the INS’s Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, a database known as Sevis. Schools will also have to notify the INS if a student who has registered does not show up for classes.

“It’s just crazy,” said Eric Piel, UTEP’s director of international programs. “It’s making us enforcers of INS policies and border patrol while we’re really here to advise students culturally and about what classes to take.” This fall, Piel was in the process of hiring two temporary full-time employees to enter the data, and he said he may wind up having to purchase a new computer system as well. The estimated cost is between $20,000 and $40,000.

“A true administrative nightmare,” was how Tim Nugent, vice president of student services at El Paso Community College, which enrolls about 2,000 Mexican students each semester, described the new tracking regulations. “They have really thrown up a barrier to our ability to offer educational pursuits to our neighbor across the river.”

The problem, said Nugent, is that policymakers rarely consider the border region as they are hashing out these issues. “All of these rules were written thinking these students are going to come from Germany or the interior of Mexico and go to school in the heartland of the U.S.,” he said.

In general, Nugent and UTEP administrators said they have an excellent relationship with local INS officials. But the lack of sensitivity among INS higher-ups and legislators clearly rankles. And while Nugent and UTEP administrators believe the worst is over, there are concerns about the future, especially if the U.S. goes to war with Iraq.

“Whether a border can on the one hand be a relatively impregnable line of defense against everything you want to keep out, and can somehow at the same time, be used to facilitate trade, and contribute to economic development and to human development, is the question,” said the Center for Inter-American and Border Studies’ Amastae. “I don’t see how it’s possible to do both.”

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