



West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

Higher Education
News Clippings

Week of May 3, 2009

May 4, 2009

The Cost of Going to College

Charleston Staff

Most college students in West Virginia will be heading home for the summer before the state Higher Education Policy Commission takes a final vote on tuition and fee increases for next fall.

The HEPC was set to vote on the proposals last Friday, but Chancellor Brian Noland says the information had not been received from all of the institutions. The schools boards of governors must first approve tuition and fee increases.

Chancellor Noland says he hopes to schedule a special meeting of the policy commission next week to consider the proposals including one from Marshall University. He says it's unlikely the WVU Board of Governors will have a final decision on its tuition and fee plan by that time.

Tuition and fees have been going up in recent years, but the average increase for undergraduate In-state students remains below most of the 15 states in the southern region.

In-state students paid an average of \$2,116 for tuition and fees in the 1996-97 school year and by 2007-08 that had jumped to \$4,406.

Even though it more than doubled, the average cost is 12th lowest among the 15 southern states.

Charleston Daily Mail

DAILYMAIL.COM

May 4, 2009

Colleges poised to raise tuition Chancellor says institutions have little choice given state funding trend

by Ry Rivard, Daily Mail staff

West Virginia's public colleges are likely to get their annual tuition increases approved in coming days, continuing an unabated rise in costs for students here and around the country.

This year, increases are expected to be in the 4-8 percent range. But that's only a small part of a larger picture. While students have shouldered more and more, the state has set aside relatively less and less for college operating costs.

Student tuition and fees have risen by 80 percent or more over the past decade at all 10 of West Virginia's state-run four-year colleges and universities, according to data from the state Higher Education Policy Commission.

During that period, state lawmakers have increased budgets for those same 10 institutions by less than 2 percent, according to appropriations figures from institution financial statements provided by the commission.

That slight increase, from \$328 million in fiscal year 1998-99 to \$334 million in 2007-2008, has not been enough to keep up with rising costs.

If lawmakers had increased money for those 10 budgets along with inflation, they would be paying \$420 million, according to figures calculated using a tool from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

But that doesn't tell the whole story, said Brian Noland, the chancellor of the higher education commission.

In addition to inflationary pressures, institutions require funding to support enrollment growth and maintain competitiveness with peer institutions, according to information from the commission.

"What gets lost in that larger picture is that from 2000 to now, state appropriations have increased, but they have not kept pace with enrollment growth," Noland said.

According to commission data, a price index prepared specifically for colleges shows that just to keep pace with last year's costs, the state college system needs an additional \$25 million in operating revenue just to maintain last year's spending level. Much of that appears set to be made up by tuition increases.

But maintaining revenue levels may not be enough to remain competitive. Right now, the state is "dead last" in spending per student among states in a 16-state region.

West Virginia has \$11,109 to spend per student, which includes state money and student fees, according to 2008 Southern Regional Education Board data provided by the state higher education commission. That is nearly \$3,000 less than the region's average of \$14,063 per student.

"We clearly are running leaner than any other state in the south," Noland said.

That can feed a vicious cycle. By having less money to put toward things like faculty salaries, top professors are harder to attract and retain. Without those professors, it can be harder to attract the private research dollars that can help colleges cut their reliance on state revenue.

And running lean still means that students and their families have had to reach ever further into their pockets - or pad them with borrowed money from student loans.

In 2000-2001, tuition made up 34 percent of college revenue in the 16-state south, according to data from the regional education board. By 2008, those same colleges relied on students for 44 percent of their overall revenue.

In West Virginia, that increase has been steeper. Students already had been paying 42 percent of college revenue in 2000. Now, they are paying about 62 percent. Only Delaware and South Carolina put more of the revenue burden on their students than West Virginia.

At Marshall University, for instance, the university's total operating revenue has increased by 43 percent - from \$115 million in 1998-1999 to \$164 million in 2007-2008 - according to policy commission data.

But the state's contribution to Marshall has increased by less than 5 percent, from \$63 million to \$66 million.

The amount of revenue from student fees has increased 46 percent, from \$37 million to \$55 million. During those same years, tuition for in-state undergraduates has gone up by 87 percent, from \$2,348 in 1998-1999 to \$4,598 in 2007-2008.

Marshall has yet to announce what it intends to do with tuition this year. Spokesman Bill Bissett said the university is essentially waiting on the Legislature to put together a budget, which has to address other things before it gets to higher education.

"Obviously legislators can't adjust the funding of constitutionally funded programs like K-12, so other institutions like higher education can be flexible. That creates concerns until you know the final level of funding," Bissett said.

Still, lawmakers can point to some apparent successes.

West Virginia, though it lags in per-student spending, does not appear to be facing the same cuts that other states will have to make to their higher education system.

There also is some higher education spending that does not show up as an operating cost line item, including the state's \$40 million Promise Scholarship program.

Charleston Daily Mail

DAILYMAIL.COM

Tuesday May 5, 2009

EDITORIAL

Higher education needs to control costs

Over the past 10 years, as state appropriations for West Virginia's public colleges and universities have risen by only 2 percent, tuition and fees have risen by 80 percent or more.

Now officials with the Higher Education Policy Commission say the state's four-year public colleges and universities will request tuition increases of 4 percent to 8 percent.

At a time of near-zero inflation, such increases will hit students hard.

But colleges and universities are between a rock and a hard place. State aid has not kept up with their rising operating expenses.

West Virginia spends \$11,109 per student, which includes student fees and state money, said Brian Noland, chancellor of the Higher Education Policy Commission.

That is the lowest among the 16 states that participate in the Southern Regional Education Board. West Virginia spends \$3,000 a year less than the region's average of \$14,063 per student.

Officials point out that tuition was 42 percent of revenues for public colleges and universities in the state in 2000. Today, it makes up 62 percent of their revenues. Of the states in the southern region, only Delaware and South Carolina ask students to carry a higher proportion of the revenue burden.

What to do? Colleges need more money, but neither the state nor students have it.

With the world in its deepest recession in 75 years, businesses and governments are cutting expenditures. As for parents and students, an 8 percent increase - or even a 4 percent one - will be difficult to manage.

Students are the customers of higher education.

They won't buy what they can't afford. Many parents couldn't even borrow money right now.

It's not a pleasant spot to be in - for anyone.

College administrators may have to consider extraordinary measures to cut expenses and get their prices down.

Charleston Daily Mail

DAILYMAIL.COM

May 5, 2009

Schools have dispensed little of 'Bucks for Brains' funding

by Ry Rivard, Daily Mail staff

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- More than a year after the state launched an ambitious five-year plan to fund research at West Virginia's two largest universities, officials have spent less than 1 percent of the money the Legislature set aside for the program.

The "Bucks for Brains" initiative, formally known as the state Research Trust Corporation, has \$50 million in state money that can be used to match private donations for research at Marshall University and West Virginia University.

To receive the matching funds, the universities must have cash on hand from private donors and a plan for spending it.

So far, the program has received requests from the two universities for about \$2.1 million, but less than \$500,000 has actually been distributed, said Paul Hill, the vice chancellor for science and research for the Higher Education Policy Commission.

Earlier this year, Marshall received \$50,000 in matching funds from the state trust fund to do transportation research and another \$415,000 for the university's new biotechnology institute.

WVU has yet to receive any money from the program, though it just days ago requested \$1.6 million for research, which includes projects in biometrics and cardiology.

Hill said he's not getting requests for the research funding at the pace he expected, but that it's understandable given last year's economy.

"This legislation was passed before the economic downturn occurred," Hill said. "Frankly we expected it to go faster than this."

Both WVU and Marshall have had since March 2008 to raise money. Marshall is eligible to receive up to 30 percent of the \$50 million in matching state money, or \$15 million. The other 70 percent has been set aside for WVU.

Marshall, which has a little more than \$3 million in private donations and pledges, is on pace to raise its share of funds to receive matching trust fund money, university spokesman Bill Bissett said.

WVU has received about \$3.7 million in gifts and pledges, according to a university press release.

Gerry Griffith, spokesman for the WVU Research Corp., said raising the matching funds will be a five-year process.

"The economic world we see in April of 2009 may not resemble the world we see in April 2010," Griffith said. "It's a situation where you keep your head down, follow the plan and execute."

Depending on how long it takes the two universities to claim their share of the funds, other research projects might benefit.

According to the "Bucks for Brains" guidelines, the smaller state universities would receive any money left over in the trust fund - or any additional funds that accumulate in the fund - after March 2013.

Hill said that because of the slow pace of requests from Marshall and WVU, the state has accumulated at least \$500,000 in interest from the trust fund that can now go to research projects at the smaller universities.

"If they'd drawn it all quickly, the (smaller) colleges would have gotten out very little," Hill said.

Last year, the Legislature created the research trust fund with an initial appropriation of \$50 million. The idea was adapted from a Kentucky program that has provided several hundred million dollars for research since 1997.

In West Virginia, the universities are not meant to spend the trust fund money or the matching donations, but rather to use the interest that accumulates from that money to fund projects.

Specifically, the money is to be invested in programs that expand research faculty and infrastructure in key areas linked to economic development, health care and job growth.

In an average year, WVU would receive a 7 to 8 percent return on such money, said Bill Nevin, a spokesman for the WVU Foundation, which handles the university's investments.

That means WVU could receive around \$5 million a year if it accumulates a total of \$70 million. With similar returns, Marshall would receive about \$2 million a year in money from its endowment.

Those amounts, while relatively small, are stable funding in contrast to other sources of money - including one-time grants or donations - that are spent and then gone.

"The thing that will kill research - and it has, over and over again - is an economic downturn like we're in now," said Marshall President Stephen Kopp.

The "Bucks for Brains" money is something schools can count on.

"What you are talking about is a sustainable platform for research," Kopp said.

Kopp said the program already has been helpful in attracting attract star biology professor Eric Kmiec from the University of Delaware to lead Marshall's new Institute for Interdisciplinary Research.

Marshall hopes to use the money from things like patents and other grants to recapitalize its programs, with the state funds acting as seed money.

"The idea is to invest and reinvest in success," Kopp said.



Federal Funding to Help Science Research Program at WVU

The National Science Foundation awarded more than \$300,000

CHARLESTON -- Senator Jay Rockefeller IV and Senator Robert C. Byrd applauded the National Science Foundation for awarding the West Virginia University Research Corporation with \$308,962 in federal funds.

The money will establish a 10-week summer research program for undergraduate students to study ecology, environmental biology, geography, molecular biology or genomics.

"Getting students interested in science is just the beginning. Providing them with opportunities like this summer program to further their education and get hands-on experience in their field is just as critical for success," said Rockefeller, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. "I am excited to see how this program will serve West Virginians and I congratulate the WVU Research Corporation and Dr. Richard Thomas for securing this funding."

"Offering students this unique experience to study in a laboratory under an experienced mentor for 10 weeks will not only make our students better scientists, but will help brighten our environmental future, as these young men and women will be prepared to lead the way in these important fields," said Senator Byrd.

"We could not be more pleased that WVU and Richard Thomas have landed an award from this important National Science Foundation initiative—the Research Experience for Undergraduates program. Programs like this are absolutely vital in our efforts to encourage young people to pursue careers in the sciences," said Dr. Paul L. Hill, Vice Chancellor for Science and Research, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.

"WVU is delighted that NSF recognized the importance of the work Dr. Thomas intends to undertake with this grant. The role of the university's research has three legs: scientific discovery, dissemination of the resulting information through effective teaching and, where appropriate, commercialization of that knowledge to create a more vibrant economy. This project addresses the first two legs with hands-on experiences for young people, and addresses the third by helping produce effective and prepared leaders for the future that will have a positive impact on society," said Dr. Curt Peterson, Vice President for Research and Economic Development, and President of the WVU Research Corporation.

May 5, 2009

Good academic news expected

By Dave Hickman, Staff writer

MORGANTOWN - The NCAA is scheduled to release this year's Academic Progress Report today and, barring any surprises, the news is expected to be all good for West Virginia.

Unlike last year, when three of the school's athletic teams were penalized with loss of scholarships because of poor APR scores, none are expected to be sanctioned this year. Only two of the school's teams - men's soccer and women's crew - are expected to fall below what the NCAA considers a passing score of 925, but neither should be penalized.

That's the fewest number of WVU sports to fall below the 925 threshold in the five-year history of the APR. Two years ago, five sports were in that category. The three teams penalized last year made West Virginia one of only two BCS-level institutions (Tennessee was the other) that had multiple sports sanctioned.

The reason for West Virginia's general improvement over the course of the five years of the APR is a combination of better performance and a growing understanding of how the system works.

"I think everyone is more tuned in to it and have a better understanding of it," said Brad Cox, who last year left his position as WVU's compliance director for a job in the university's admissions office, but still handled much of the work of compiling the APR data. "I know the coaches understand it better and they've come to know that a poor report can mean the loss of scholarships."

The APR is a rolling, four-year compilation of data designed to track the academic progress of students - sport by sport and semester by semester - at every Division I institution. A team's score is gained by awarding one point for every athlete who finishes a semester in good academic standing and another point for retention, or remaining in school. A team's score is derived by dividing those points by the total possible points and multiplying by a thousand, meaning the best possible score is 1,000. The NCAA has established 925 as the minimum threshold to avoid sanctions ranging from loss of scholarships to bans on postseason eligibility.

The data in the report scheduled to be released today includes the 2004-05 school year through 2007-08.

A year ago, four WVU sports fell below the 925 cutoff - men's soccer (898), wrestling (905), women's crew (919) and women's basketball (924). All but women's basketball were penalized by a loss of scholarships for one year. Rowing was docked 1.01 (out of 20), wrestling 0.88 (of 9.9) and men's soccer 0.12 (of 9.9). The maximum the NCAA can take is 10 percent and wrestling was close to that (8.9 percent).

This year, according to Cox, only men's soccer and women's crew are expected to fall below 925, but both will be above 900. They won't be penalized, he said, because in addition to filing an academic recovery plan neither sport had what the NCAA refers to as an 0-for-2, a student who leaves school while not in academic good graces. Those cases are the ones that cripple a team's APR because it means the loss of both the academic point and the retention point.

Cox said he turned West Virginia's information into the NCAA last fall and since that time Chad Wall, the school's interim compliance director, has petitioned the NCAA for waivers regarding several students, which is commonplace. For instance, if a student transfers with a grade-point average of 2.6 or higher, he or she doesn't count against a team's APR, but all of those cases (and others) require a waiver.

"We did a bunch of them and I only had one that I was really disappointed we didn't get," Wall said.

One of the most critical areas for West Virginia in the APR has been wrestling, where the program struggled even to come close to the 925 score through the first four years, primarily because of one academic casualty and a few transfers. In fact, wrestling is the only sport that has twice been hit by scholarship reductions (the first was following the 2006 report) and until last year had not even reached 900, much less 925. But in each of the first four years of the APR the wrestling team's score improved, from 828 to 867 to 891 and, last year, to 905. Cox said that this year that score is expected to go over 925.

The improvement over the five years - and especially the last two - is timely because this year the NCAA begins instituting what it calls historical penalties. Teams that have an APR of less than 900 for three years in a row can be hit with postseason bans and, if the trend continues, restricted Division I membership for a school's entire athletic program.

At the other end of the APR scale, three women's teams at WVU were recently publicly commended by the NCAA for excellent scores. The school's soccer, cross country and indoor track teams were among 767 recognized by the NCAA for being in the top 10 percent academically over a multi-year period.



May 5, 2009

Lang: WVU lawyers defy court order Deposition of Macia scheduled, withdrawn before taking place

BY CASSIE SHANER The Dominion Post

Former WVU Provost Gerald Lang said two university attorneys violated a judge's order by scheduling a deposition Monday for former WVU General Counsel Alex Macia. Meanwhile, the WVU Board of Governors met by teleconference Monday to discuss legal and personnel issues associated with the order, but took no action.

BOG chairwoman Carolyn Long said the board has no plans to meet again before its next regularly scheduled meeting in June.

"It's an ongoing legal issue," Long said. Monongalia County Circuit Court Judge Susan Tucker's ruling blocked an academic integrity hearing regarding Lang's role in the university's decision to retroactively award a bogus executive MBA degree to Heather Bresch, Gov. Joe Manchin's daughter and chief operating officer of Mylan Inc.

Tucker's order indicated that the due process rights of Lang and others facing academic misconduct charges were violated due to conflicts of interest.

Macia was present at the meeting in which the degree decision was made, and according to documents filed in the case, he also advised WVU employees involved in the investigation of the charges against Lang and others.

But Debra Scudiere, counsel for WVU attorneys Mary Roberta Brandt and Beverly Kerr, filed motions last week claiming her clients were not given an opportunity to state their case and Tucker's decision was based on incomplete information.

Allowing Brandt and Kerr to present their case "would have allowed this Court to hear all the facts to consider the arguments, and to properly weigh the evidence," according to an amended motion filed last Thursday.

Scudiere asked the court to alter the judge's order, allow her clients to file additional motions and set a hearing to collect evidence in the case.

Scudiere and Scott Curnutte, counsel for WVU law professor and academic integrity officer Marjorie McDiarmid, both scheduled depositions for Macia in Charleston on Monday, but later withdrew those notices.

WVU spokesman Dan Kim referred questions about the decision to depose Macia to Scudiere, who did not return calls to The Dominion Post in time for this report.

McDiarmid refused to discuss the rationale for deposing Macia, but she said the academic integrity process has not continued.

"Pursuant to the judge's order, everything has stopped until things get squared away," McDiarmid said, referring to the court proceedings.

Lang's attorney, J. Michael Benninger, filed a motion asking the court to stop Macia's deposition and enforce the judge's order. Lang's motion indicated that taking Macia's deposition would undermine the court's order, continue the investigation in the academic integrity proceeding against Lang and violate Lang's due process rights again.

According to Lang's motion: "As the Order grants the relief requested in this case, there are no presently pending cognizable questions of law or fact to be ruled upon by the court at this time; thus, there is no procedural reason that any discovery should be conducted at this time."

Benninger also did not return calls to The Dominion Post in time for this report.

Attorneys for former College of Business and Economics deans R. Stephen Sears and Cyril Logar — who were also facing academic integrity hearings, according to court documents — also did not return calls to The Dominion Post in time for this report. They filed renewed motions to intervene in the case last week, too.

They claimed that taking Macia's deposition would violate the court's order, as well as their clients' due process rights.

Sears and Logar initially sought to intervene in the Lang case before the judge's ruling, but Tucker denied those motions because they were not filed in a timely manner. However, her order indicated that "the rights of all the accused have been violated."

Court documents did not indicate how the cancellation of Macia's deposition would affect the motions filed last week.

A hearing date for those motions had not been set as of mid-day Monday.



May 7, 2009

Magrath, BOG ask Tucker to reconsider Say Lang ruling made without all information

BY CASSIE SHANER The Dominion Post

The WVU Board of Governors, interim WVU President C. Peter Magrath and the university's academic integrity officer are all asking a judge to reconsider a ruling that blocked an academic misconduct hearing for former WVU Provost Gerald Lang.

Monongalia County Circuit Court Judge Susan Tucker's order indicated that the due process rights of Lang and others facing similar charges were violated due to conflicts of interest.

The hearings were related to WVU's decision to retroactively award a bogus executive MBA degree to Heather Bresch, Gov. Joe Manchin's daughter and chief operating officer of Mylan Inc.

Marjorie McDiarmid, WVU's academic integrity officer, said the court should have scheduled a preliminary hearing. She also said the court applied the wrong rules of law in the case. She notes that Lang asked the court to intervene in an incomplete, internal process that is used to address internal matters.

According to the motion: "It is entirely possible that the internal procedure will ultimately result in a conclusion that he did not commit academic misconduct. Even if the internal procedure results in a finding that he did, the finding might be quite mild and therefore acceptable to Petitioner Lang. And, it is entirely possible that at the end of the process, no sanctions are imposed upon Petitioner Lang."

McDiarmid also stated that she did not have an attorney-client relationship with anyone involved in the Lang case, and she had no conflict of interest in the academic misconduct review.

The motion filed Monday on behalf of the board and Magrath asks the court to set a hearing to collect evidence in the case and enter an order that "appropriately reflects such factual development of the record." It provides no further explanation, however.

Debra Scudiere, counsel for WVU attorneys Mary Roberta Brandt and Beverly Kerr, filed motions urging the court to take similar action last week. She said her clients were not given an opportunity to state their case, and Tucker's decision was based on incomplete information.

Scudiere and Scott Curnutte, McDiarmid's attorney, also scheduled depositions for former WVU General Counsel Alex Macia that were later canceled.

McDiarmid has refused to discuss the rationale for deposing Macia, and Scudiere has not returned calls to The Dominion Post seeking comment.

J. Michael Benninger, Lang's attorney, responded Tuesday to motions to intervene filed last week by former College of Business and Economics Deans R. Stephen Sears and Cyril Logar.

Logar and Sears are also facing academic misconduct charges related to the Bresch scandal, according to court documents. Benninger indicated that he has no objection to the motions, and he believes they should be granted since Tucker's order indicated their rights had been violated, too.



May 8, 2009

Lang attorney: WVU had time to give evidence Lawyers had opportunity to object before ruling

BY CASSIE SHANER The Dominion Post

Attorneys for the WVU Board of Governors, interim WVU President C. Peter Magrath and two WVU lawyers never asked to present additional evidence in a court case related to the Heather Bresch degree scandal, an attorney for former Provost Gerald Lang said Thursday.

J. Michael Benninger, counsel for Lang, said lawyers for all the parties involved had ample time to ask the court to collect evidence or object before a judge's ruling last month, but they didn't.

"How would the court know they wanted a hearing if they didn't ask for it?" Benninger said.

"The court cases are clear. You can't sleep on your position. You either raise it or you waive it."

Monongalia County Circuit Court Judge Susan Tucker's order indicated that the due process rights of Lang and others facing academic misconduct charges were violated due to conflicts of interest. Her ruling blocked an academic integrity hearing slated to be held last week.

Tucker's decision — announced at an April 22 hearing — was based on the facts of the case presented in court documents.

She did not take testimony, and no one objected at the hearing.

But lawyers for the board, Magrath, the university's academic integrity officer and two WVU attorneys — Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel Mary Roberta Brandt and Deputy General Counsel Beverly Kerr — have filed motions since then asking the court to reconsider the decision and alter the order.

They argued that Tucker's decision was based on incomplete information, but Benninger said affidavits filed before the judge's ruling never questioned the facts in the case.

"They haven't once said what's in dispute," Benninger said.

Benninger responded to motions to amend the judge's order filed by Debra Scudiere, counsel for Brandt and Kerr, last week, and he said he plans to file a response to similar motions filed on behalf of the board, Magrath and academic integrity officer Majorie McDiarmid soon.

Benninger said it's up to the court to decide how to handle the motions filed following Tucker's order, including one asking the court to enforce the judge's order and stop a deposition for former WVU General Counsel Alex Macia.

Scudiere and Scott Curnutte, counsel for McDiarmid, each scheduled a deposition for Macia that was later canceled. But Benninger said Lang's motion is still valid.

"Why did they wait until after the court's ruling to try to interview him?" Benninger said. "That's never been explained to me, and there's no legitimate basis to do so at this time."

Scudiere has not returned repeated calls from The Dominion Post seeking comment on the case.

Samuel Spatafore, counsel for the board, and Magrath referred questions to the general counsel's office Thursday, but no one was available to answer questions.

WVU spokeswoman Becky Lofstead referred questions to the attorneys involved in the case.

Curnutte did not return a call to The Dominion Post on Thursday.

An employee at his office indicated that he was unavailable for most of the day.

News and Sentinel

Parkersburg

May 8, 2009

Why WVU-P can't become 'U'

By Jess Mancini

For those of you who want West Virginia University at Parkersburg to separate itself from WVU and rename itself a university, think again.

The school doesn't meet the standards to call itself a university.

The Legislature last year passed a law that separates WVU and WVU at Parkersburg unless an agreement was reached by July 1. WVU agreed to indefinitely continue the service agreements while use of the name and trademark expire in two years. The agreement can be continued upon mutual consent, but the WVU at Parkersburg Board of Governors prefers a more permanent arrangement.

Joe Campbell, chairman of the WVU at Parkersburg board, is encouraging comment and opinions from residents about what the school should do. Residents can comment at the college Web site, www.wvup.edu/, and click on the survey link on the page.

"I'm looking for as much as we can get from out there," he said.

I do not support terminating any agreement that eliminates the support services from WVU or the use of the name and logo. Those are tremendous benefits to the students.

This discussion is moot if the board of governors agrees to the two-year deal and we keep the status quo for at least another 24 months. It's not if the board decides otherwise and that the school will be known on July 1 by a new name sans WVU and the famous flying logo.

"University" in the name is a major draw for students. Public schools of higher learning like WVU at Parkersburg follow the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission in Chancellor's Interpretive Memo 15, "Criteria for Designation of University Status," adopted on Feb, 15, 2002, which I'll cite verbatim so there's no misinterpretation:

A state college requesting a change to university status and seeking a major change in mission such as the offering of graduate-level degree programs must meet the following criteria:

1. Offer at least one master's-level degree program.
2. Have an approved mission statement which provides for the offering of graduate programs.
3. Obtain the approval of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association to offer any master's degree program.

4. Have a faculty, excluding community and technical college faculty, in which at least two thirds of tenured and tenured track faculty hold the terminal degree, typically the doctorate.

An institution's name will not determine an institution's status as a university or be considered for the purpose of defining mission, approving graduate programs or allocating funds. Institutional name changes require legislative approval and are a prerogative of the legislature, not the Higher Education Policy Commission. The Higher Education Policy Commission does not recommend inclusion of the word "university" in the name of an institution until it attains university status.

That's why the school can't be called a university. WVU at Parkersburg doesn't offer a master's program, however, it is unique from other community and technical colleges in West Virginia in that the school offers six baccalaureate programs.

The urgency upon the board of governors at WVU at Parkersburg if it rejects the name and logo agreement is a new name must be selected before July 1 because after that the West Virginia Legislature names the school and we could end up with something residents perhaps don't want, like "Wood County Community and Technical College."

The Legislature has more Democrats than Carter's has liver pills and they might be more than willing to name it after, for example, Sen. Robert C. Byrd, the longest serving U.S. senator in history, if it means making political points. Byrd has many things named after him in West Virginia, but no college, yet.

We can joke, but it's serious business for the college, students and the community that has supported the school for nearly 50 years. It's serious enough for me to write about it twice in successive weeks and probably next week, too, about a memo explaining WVU's reasoning on its name and logo.

Somerville named as dean of MU College of Science

HUNTINGTON -- A microbiologist with expertise in microbial ecology, microbial genetics and bioterrorism has been chosen to lead the Marshall University College of Science.

Dr. Charles Somerville, professor of biological sciences at Marshall, has accepted an appointment as the next dean of the College of Science. Somerville has taught at Marshall for 12 years. He said he is grateful for the support of both the search committee and the administration.

"This is a time when separations between traditional scientific disciplines are diminishing and new interdisciplinary teaching and research programs are emerging. I am excited by that change," Somerville said. "I will encourage the growth of cross-disciplinary interactions within the College of Science, and will look for opportunities to establish novel interdisciplinary initiatives across campus."

Gayle Ormiston, provost and senior vice president of academic affairs for Marshall, said Somerville was selected from an impressive panel of candidates after a nationwide search.

"The university is fortunate to have the quality of candidate for such an important decanal appointment already on staff," Ormiston said. "I and the other deans look forward to working with Dr. Somerville as we collaborate to improve upon and expand Marshall's programmatic offerings in the College of Science."

Somerville will begin his appointment July 1, replacing interim dean Dr. Wayne Elmore.

"We appreciate the integrity and grace with which Dr. Elmore represented the interests of the College of Science during this academic year as our search committee worked to select our new dean," Ormiston said.

Math Machine makes debut at Marshall

By Clark Davis

May 1, 2009 · After four years of building the machine that spans 4 tables and looks like an erector set that solves differential equations, Marshall University students and faculty want people to know it's available for use.

The math machine was constructed by math professor Bonita Lawrence and her team of students who have volunteered to help build only the second machine of its kind in the United States.

Richard Merritt started on the project as an undergraduate and now is a graduate student. Merritt says without the project he might have quit school.

"It's kept me in school; I'll put it that way to you," Merritt said. "If it hadn't been for the project I wouldn't be in this university right now going to graduate school. I probably wouldn't have made it through my undergraduate degree if hadn't been for me being able to come in here and build this machine.

"I'm a differential analyzer geek I guess you could say. I come up here every single day that I have time to do it and work on it trying to make it better," Merritt said.

Using gears and levers the differential analyzer solves differential equations by mapping them out on a piece of paper.

The mathematician enters an equation into the machine and it constructs curves on the paper from information about the way the curve changes or its derivatives.

Lawrence says they weren't sure that Saturday night would ever come.

"It's a long time in the coming, but it feels just as good as I thought it would," Lawrence said. "It's been a bit of a struggle; there are always financial issues with projects like this."

Lawrence says the grand opening is just the beginning.

"We now move from trying to get it to run smoothly to actually using it for its purpose," Lawrence said.

"And whenever I have people in here they really are amazed by it; they really think it's fantastic. So now we can show how the machine represents the mathematics. We are fine tuning and we are just about finished with that."

The next step for the differential analyzer is to teach math to students in the area in a different manner.

To start the building of the differential analyzer the team visited Tim Robinson, a mathematician in California, who has the only other math machine in the country. He says he's proud to be part of the project.

"There's an ah-ha moment that people get when they see how the machine operates and it's very satisfying to see that," Robinson said.

"So knowing that this is going to be here now and that generations of students will get to use it and not only at the university but high school groups, I'm sure it will have a significant impact," he said.

Lawrence says Saturday night is all about making sure the public knows the math machine is there for them to learn from.

"This is the only publically accessible differential analyzer that we know of in the country," Lawrence said.

"So I want certainly the local neighborhood to know that we have it here because I want students and their teachers from universities and high schools to come and actually have the opportunity to learn from it. It needs to be known that it's actually here."

The event is open to the public Saturday night at 7:30 in the Francis Booth Experimental Theatre at Marshall.

May 3, 2009

It's West Liberty U School Marks New Era

By CASEY HICKS

WEST LIBERTY - Goodbye, West Liberty State College.

Hello, West Liberty University.

Following a week's worth of fun, flash animation festivals, foundation dinners, music and, for the most part, typical spring weather, West Liberty University officials ushered in a new era of higher education at 12:01 a.m. today.

The campus marked the change with a countdown and fireworks at midnight. Faculty, students and administration officials paraded through the campus and town of West Liberty earlier in the day to kick off Saturday's events.

"On a truly historic evening we brought together so many; our alumni, our students, our faculty, our staff, and the community. What a tremendous site to see so many gather to celebrate our new found stature. It has been a tremendous week and a very memorable evening. After 172 years the time has arrived, we have become West Liberty University," President Robin Capehart said.

The students, faculty and staff who brought out their black and gold this past week aren't the only ones excited about West Liberty University. Prominent alumni in the Upper Ohio Valley are just as enthusiastic about the status change.

"It's obviously a great thing, and it opens a whole new era for the institution," said Clyde Campbell, former president of West Liberty State College.

In this new phase, the university will be able to offer graduate studies in addition to the Master of Arts in Education degree currently offered. West Liberty Alumni Association President Carol Frum said she hopes the university's expanded programs will be able to draw in a larger base of students looking for an affordable undergraduate or graduate education.

"Once they've completed that bachelor's program, they have the chance to carry on at (West Liberty) if that's what they so choose," she said, noting students previously had to apply for post-graduate studies at another institution.

She added that she believes West Liberty will be able to "meet the needs of tri-state professionals" to "advance their potential."

The university will be able to reach more non-traditional students in August when the West Liberty University Highlands Center is expected to open.

According to Will Turani, director of global operations and sustainability for Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe's Wheeling office and a member of the West Liberty Board of Governors for eight years, the university status comes just in time to bring non-traditional students into the West Liberty fold. Those with scheduling issues or transportation difficulties should find The Highlands campus more convenient, and it will bring more opportunities to the Upper Ohio Valley and beyond, he said.

"It will provide tremendous, easy access to an affordable education," Turani said of The Highlands campus. "I think it's just the resource our community needs."

Ohio County Administrator Greg Stewart agrees. A West Liberty alumnus, Stewart said that if the college hadn't been available, he wouldn't have been able to afford a higher education.

"It'll feel so good to raise up the sign that says West Liberty University" at The Highlands, Stewart said. "There's no better bang for your buck than West Liberty."

May 6, 2009

WLU Seeking to Sell Warwood Center

By JOSELYN KING

West Liberty University is planning to sell its Warwood Center as it moves programs there to a new facility being constructed at The Highlands.

West Liberty is scheduled to move to the second floor of the Town Center development at The Highlands on Aug. 1, said John E. Wright, the university's vice president and chief financial officer.

A public hearing is set for 3 p.m. Thursday, May 14, in the Boyle Room at West Liberty's main campus to discuss the prospective sale of the Warwood Center.

Built in 1917, the Warwood Center, which is located on Warwood Avenue, previously served as Warwood High School.

It became the possession of the West Liberty University in the mid-1990s, Wright said.

Night classes currently take place at the Warwood Center, and a master's degree in education also is offered there. The Warwood YMCA and West Liberty SMART Center are housed in the building.

Classes currently available at the Warwood Center will be available at The Highlands location, as will additional master's degree opportunities.

West Liberty must follow existing state law as it seeks to sell the property, Wright noted.

"The requirement is that we get two appraisals," he said. "If we get a price higher than the two appraisals, we will sell."

"Our aim is to know whether we will get a bid on it by mid-June. At that point, we will start to talk with other state agencies to see if they can use the building."

Wright said the Warwood Center has much to offer.

"It is a beautiful old building that has been well maintained," Wright said. "It is in good shape. The original gym is in there, and it is one of the older school buildings in Wheeling."

Original lockers from Warwood High School are still in the building, as is a display of memorabilia from the school.

The new West Liberty facility at The Highlands will have 20,000 square feet of space, and is expected to cost \$1.2 million. The West Virginia Legislature appropriated \$800,000 in taxpayer dollars to the project last year.

May 5, 2009

MSU gets approval for doctorate program

Establishment of two new campuses also announced

By Fred Pace, Register-Herald Reporter

Mountain State University is growing.

University officials will officially share the results of the recent reaffirmation of its accreditation, as well the establishment of a doctoral degree program in Beckley and the establishment of new campuses in Washington, D.C., and Mooresville, N.C.

A press conference is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. today at the John W. Eye Conference Center located at 500 South Kanawha Street to make the formal announcement.

"This is all great news for Mountain State University," said Dr. Charles Polk, president of the university. "This gives us a new 10-year window before the next reaffirmation process."

Polk said Kelli Mays, senior vice president and special assistant to the president at MSU, directed the preparation work done by the university for the accreditation process.

"It was a very monumental task that took a commitment from everyone across the university," she said.

Mays said MSU embarked upon its self-study process nearly three years ago to prepare for its comprehensive visit from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (HLC).

Polk said the university's comprehensive visit took place during October 2008.

"It included not just a request for reaffirmation of its accreditation but seven change requests as well," he said. "Everything we asked for was approved."

Polk said the change requests will give the university additional opportunities and tools to serve the public.

One change request was to add four new sites, which are different from campuses.

"We will have three new sites in Pennsylvania and one new site in Florida," Polk said. "We will also have a new master's in nursing degree in Florida."

The university had campus sites in Beckley, Martinsburg, Orlando, Fla., Hickory, N.C., and Center Township, Pa., just outside of Pittsburgh, but also received approval to add two new campus sites in Washington, D.C. and Mooresville, N.C.

"This now gives the university seven campus sites," he said.

Polk said the university hopes to begin program offerings in Washington, D.C. by June 30.

“It’s going to be at the U.S. Department of Agriculture graduate school facility,” he said.

Polk said the university also asked for approval to offer all of its programs online.

“They said we could do three in the beginning,” Polk explained. “So we’ll now offer online a master’s in psychology, a doctorate in executive leadership and undergraduate programs in legal studies. After one year, we will have permission to do all our programs online.”

Polk said it gives the university the ability to penetrate markets all around the world with all of its programs.

“This should dramatically increase MSU’s enrollment numbers,” he said.

The new graduate program in psychology is needed in West Virginia.

“We wanted to export that to our other campuses,” said Polk.

Polk says the new doctoral level program is the first offered by MSU.

“Between now and September, we’ll be gearing up to put in place here, and at our other campuses, an online doctorate in executive leadership,” he said. “It will be the first doctorate of its kind in West Virginia and maybe one of the first in the country. We are extremely excited about becoming a doctoral granting institution.”

Polk says these new changes make the university a major player in higher education.

“This puts MSU on the map,” he said.

Polk said these changes are on the same level as the school’s name change from The College of West Virginia to Mountain State University.

“For this little community here to have an institution offering a doctorate level degree gives Beckley something to feel proud about,” he said.

May 6, 2009

How a Student-Friendly Kindle Could Change the Textbook Market

By JEFFREY R. YOUNG

Rumors that Amazon will introduce a wide-format Kindle have the news media and bloggers speculating about whether the new gadget will spark an electronic-textbook revolution and lighten backpacks nationwide.

This week The Wall Street Journal reported that Amazon plans to work with a handful of universities on a pilot project featuring Kindles loaded with textbooks. Officials at the institutions named in the article—Arizona State University, Case Western Reserve University, Pace University, Princeton University, Reed College, and the University of Virginia's business school—refused to reveal details, citing nondisclosure agreements. But textbook publishers and resellers, industry watchers, and students have been happy to chime in about what the reported move might mean for them.

Most experts interviewed by The Chronicle expressed skepticism that students would buy and carry around a Kindle for textbooks, even if the device was bigger and had better annotating and Web-browsing capabilities than Amazon's current e-book reader. But the new gadget might do something that all of the current providers of e-textbooks have failed to do—make digital textbooks seem cool.

The tough question is, How will Amazon succeed where all previous electronic-textbook efforts have failed?

A Tiny Piece of the Market

Most college students—more than 80 percent, according to a survey by Educause—already own portable machines that can display electronic textbooks: They're called laptops. And more than half of all major textbooks are already offered in electronic form for download to those laptops.

Yet so far sales of electronic textbooks are tiny, despite efforts by college bookstores to make the option to buy digital versions clearer by advertising e-books next to printed ones on their shelves. "It's a very small percentage of our sales at this point," said Bill Dampier, general manager of MBS Direct, a major textbook reseller.

What the textbook industry needs is the equivalent of an iTunes store for e-books, say some experts, who note that sales of digital music never took off until Apple created the iPod and an easy-to-use online music marketplace. That's why Amazon seems like a promising entrant.

Except for one thing: Publishers have already set up a digital store meant to serve as the iTunes of e-textbooks, and it has been slow to catch on. The online store, called CourseSmart, was started two years ago by the five largest textbook publishers. Now 12 publishers contribute content to the service, which offers more than 6,300 titles. The e-books are all designed to be read on laptops or desktops, rather than Kindles or other dedicated e-book reading devices.

One problem for CourseSmart has been a lack of awareness by both students and professors that the service even exists.

"I've never heard of that," said David K. Belsky, a graduate student at the State University of New York at Albany who started a Facebook group calling for cheaper textbook options. He has heard about Amazon's plans for a new Kindle for textbooks, but he said he isn't likely to invest in one. "I already have my laptop, and there's only so many things you can carry," he said, adding that he regularly types notes during class on his laptop. "I wouldn't sit there taking notes on a Kindle, that's for sure."

Students at Northwest Missouri State University had the same reaction when officials did a pilot project there last year with Sony's e-book reader. Students were excited at first to get an unusual new gadget, but they quickly found the readers too hard to flip pages in and take notes on, and the institution decided to switch to delivering e-books on laptops in subsequent experiments.

"It didn't lend itself to the way students actually study," said Paul Klute, who runs the university's e-textbook project. "The students skip around, they look for key words, they look for pictures or charts or graphs. ... They wanted to be able to jump to Page 29 without having to push a button 29 times."

Screen size was also cited by some professors as a problem with Sony's device, Mr. Klute said, so if Amazon's Kindle is bigger, that could help.

What Is an Electronic Textbook?

Still, getting around the image problem may be one of the biggest challenges facing Amazon's new project. Leaders of CourseSmart and the publishers creating e-textbooks for laptops say that more students and professors would use their products if they understood the features the latest editions allow, including easy searching and the ability to share notes with friends online.

Some professors who were early adopters of e-books several years ago say they had bad experiences—because back then many publishers simply sold noninteractive PDF documents that were hard to navigate.

"There probably needs to be a rebranding of the term e-book," said Jeffrey Ho, a manager at McGraw Hill Higher Education whose official title is e-book czar. When the company has shown e-textbooks to instructors, "generally there's a sense of them being impressed and also being surprised that it can do all of these things," he said.

Mr. Ho said that his company is not involved in the Amazon project and that he sees computers as the best device for reading electronic textbooks, rather than Kindles or other e-book devices.

Perhaps students and professors just need a demonstration of what an e-book can do and they'll jump in—especially considering that electronic texts typically cost half as much as printed versions. Amazon has the marketing power and cachet to provide that demo.

Publishers are eager to go digital in hopes of eliminating the used-book market, as buyers are prohibited from reselling electronic books, argues Albert N. Greco, a professor of marketing at Fordham University's Graduate School of Business who studies the textbook industry. That market represents "a staggering amount of business that the publishers lose," he said, "so by going to digital they'll be able to regain what they lose in used books."

So plenty of people are watching whether Amazon will succeed in raising awareness, becoming the go-to spot, and reshaping the whole textbook market in the process.

Staying on the Job

By Scott Jaschik

Among the many concerns of academics about the economic meltdown last year was that it would interrupt the steady flow of retirements that allow departments to bring in new colleagues who may represent disciplinary shifts (and who typically are paid less).

A survey released by TIAA-CREF on Thursday confirms anecdotal evidence that many professors are indeed pushing back their plans for retirement. The data suggest that colleges may need to provide more incentives for retirements, or see far fewer people leave. And with many institutions already curtailing hiring, retirement delays could make a tight job market for new Ph.D.'s even tighter.

In a series of surveys -- over the last three months of 2008 and the first three months of 2009 -- of TIAA-CREF participants who are at least 50 years old, about one third each month reported delaying planned retirement dates. A similar proportion reported that they were changing their plans for how they would live in retirement, presumably planning for more frugality. (While the survey was conducted of samples from all TIAA-CREF participants, not just those in higher education, the vast majority of participants work in academe.)

Paul J. Yakoboski, principal research fellow at the TIAA-CREF Institute, said that the "significant minority" of professors apparently delaying retirement was large enough that colleges may need to adjust expectations. He noted that many of those hit hard by drops in pension funds also have owned homes for some time, and have viewed that home equity as part of their retirement nest eggs -- and may now find themselves unable to sell their homes or to get a desired price.

For colleges hoping to encourage retirements, this means two things, he said. One is that whatever incentive levels have been offered previously to encourage retirements may not result in much movement now. So the incentives may need to be greater. "It's going to take more today than it would have a year ago," he said. He also said that phased retirement incentives may be more important than ever -- since they may fit the needs of faculty members who want to move in the direction of retirement, but who want a few years for their investment funds or home values to recover.

The survey also examined how participants are handling their (somewhat smaller) retirement accounts. About one third in most recent months have reported that they have changed asset allocations since the economic meltdown started last year.

Yakoboski said that some may be moving investments to "something they perceive as safer," but he said that others may view now as a time that equities are available at lower prices than has been the case. Generally, investment experts advise those who are approaching retirement age -- as the samples of the TIAA-CREF surveys are -- to become less risky in how they allocate their accounts. Some people ignore that advice

or just don't monitor their accounts, Yakoboski said, so "the market may be prodding people to do something they should have done all along."

The survey suggests that TIAA-CREF participants are not responding by putting all their money in a mattress. Most months since October, the percentage of those saying that they are decreasing contributions to retirement funds is less than 10 percent, while most months at least 15 percent said that they were increasing contributions.

May 8, 2009

Fleshing Out the Federal Budget

By Doug Lederman

WASHINGTON -- A commonly held view of President Obama within higher education is that he "gets it" -- as in he recognizes (in contrast to his predecessor, it is often implied if not said) the importance, even the centrality, of academe's major products: education, research and training. He says the right things with his words (in speeches like those he gave to Congress in February and before the National Academy of Sciences last month) and his actions: specifically how his administration, in its first months, has allocated one-time money to stimulate the economy and envisioned reshaping federal spending in the 2009-10 budget outline the White House released in February.

As the Obama administration took the wraps off its full 2009-10 budget plan Thursday, there was plenty of praise from advocates for education and research about a spending plan that would dramatically increase spending on student financial aid and significantly bolster support for basic scientific research, particularly in the physical sciences.

But as administration officials took pains at virtually every turn to note that they were trying to be both strategic and "fiscally responsible" -- code words for generously supporting key priorities but necessarily shortchanging other things in response -- rare sounds of dissatisfaction with the Obama budget bubbled up from within higher education on Thursday.

The biggest complaints came from representatives that care about the (many) parts of the Education Department budget that received no increase in funds, as the administration focused virtually of the new higher education money it would provide in 2009-10 on increasing aid for students, most notably by creating an assured and steadily growing stream of funding for Pell Grants.

Maureen Hoyler is executive vice president of the Council for Opportunity in Higher Education, which lobbies on behalf of the TRIO programs for low-income students, which was frequently a target for budget cutters during the Bush administration. Hoyler said that by focusing all of its new resources on financial aid and proposing flat funding for TRIO and programs like Gear Up that help economically disadvantaged students prepare for and succeed in college, the Obama administration was taking an overly narrow approach to Obama's goal of ratcheting up the country's college-going rate.

"This is a one-shot budget," Hoyler said. "The president's goal is not a simple one to achieve, since right now only 8 percent of low-income students graduate from college, and we've historically underestimated the complexity of getting low income students into and through college. But this budget says they don't get the complexity of the issue facing low-income, first-generation students, and think they can fix it just with money and some research."

Similar disenchantment about the administration's perceived failure to put its money where its mouth is came from advocates for career and technical education. Despite the president's lofty rhetoric about how every American should have at least a year of education or career training, the Education Department proposes no increase in funds

for the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Program, said Kimberly A. Green, executive director of the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education Consortium. “

"Level funding this program is like putting a temporary patch on a hole in a dam that is ready to burst," she said in a news release. "Demand for these programs is up. The pace of technological change is increasing. Equipment needs are growing." Perkins funds have remained flat since 2002, her group noted; in addition, the Labor Department budget would keep level funding for most elements of the Workforce Investment Act, the country's primary job training program, except for a \$71 million increase in training for unemployed or dislocated workers.

And the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, which puts biomedical science atop its list of priorities, suggested a disconnect between the president's words and actions. "We would like to have seen the strong support for medical research expressed by President Obama matched by sizable funding increases for the National Institutes of Health in his FY 2010 budget," said Richard Marchase, the group's president.

In presenting the budget, administration officials generally shrugged off those and other complaints. They emphasized the fact that the federal government has just poured tens of billions of dollars into education, job training and other discretionary programs as part of the economic recovery law Congress passed this winter, and noted that the country is facing a future of exploding deficits and must find ways to constrain spending, generally, in the years ahead. (Republicans weren't buying the administration's seriousness on the latter point.)

In that context, the Obama budget's recognition that education and science need and deserve disproportionate levels of financial support is gratifying, John Holdren, the president's science adviser and director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, said at a briefing on the research and development budget Thursday at the American Association for the Advancement of Science. "We in the science and technology community have done better than just about any [other] constituency," Holdren said. "We have a president who 'gets it' -- that investments in science and technology are just that: investments in our future."

Bob Shireman, deputy under secretary for education, said that "primary reaction" of the career education people he had talked to was that they were "thrilled that we didn't eliminate [vocational education funds] like the previous eight budgets did" during the Bush administration. "Given the current budget situation, flat funding is the situation that the majority of programs are in, so that we can put our priority on a couple of very big things, like the Pell Grant increase."

Because the new administration unveiled its spending plans for 2010 in two stages, with an initial splash in February and the more detailed look Thursday, there were relatively few surprises in the hundreds of pages of budget documents and program-by-program numbers released yesterday (okay, we didn't read them all...). But there were a few twists, including about the centerpiece of the administration's higher education plan: to end its payments to lenders in the guaranteed student loan program and use the proceeds to ensure a dedicated, growing stream of funds for Pell Grants.

The Education Department had touted the proposal as turning the Pell Grant into an entitlement like Social Security, such that the money comes from the ("mandatory") part

of the federal budget that does not require approval from Congressional appropriators each year. Buried deep in the budget documents, however, was a description of the envisioned Pell program as an "appropriated entitlement," which struck many as an oxymoron and led to concerns from some higher ed lobbyists that the promise of a guaranteed stream of money, shielded from the whims of budget cycles and political fights, might be illusory.

But Education Department officials sought to reassure them that the change -- which was almost certainly proposed as a way to ensure leading Congressional Democrats that they would still play a role in setting funding for the government's main college aid program -- would not materially change the plan. As department officials envision it, they would amend the Higher Education Act to set the maximum Pell Grant at \$5,500, an increase of \$769 over the current figure, and then have it increase annually (and automatically) by the rise in the Consumer Price Index plus 1 percentage point.

The money would come from the mandatory part of the budget, so that spending on it would not compete with other domestic priorities, but the twist is that that level of increase would kick in unless Congress specifically decided otherwise, said Shireman. "The appropriations committees would have the opportunity, if they wanted to, to give more or less, and if they wanted to increase it, they would have to find the funds for doing that."

The other revelation out of the Education Department's budget documents Thursday could be found in one brief, simple sentence about the Academic Competitiveness and National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grants, which were created by Congress as part of budget reconciliation legislation in 2006 and have never been particularly embraced by college officials, partly because they mix students' financial need and academic merit as criteria.

The section of the administration's budget summary about the two grant programs closes with the terse "The ACG/SMART programs expire after 2010," and Shireman confirmed in an interview Thursday that the Obama administration planned to let the programs lapse after the authority for the programs expires next year. "That was created as a limited term, mandatory program, and we have no intention to renew that temporary mandatory funding," he said.

Highlights of the administration's 2010 budget for higher education are below, followed by a table with more details:

- Transform the Pell Grant Program into an entitlement program that, like Social Security and Medicare, would ensure a minimum level of funding that would increase each year. This would spare the government's bedrock need-based financial aid program from having to depend on the whims of Congress each year.
- Eliminate the bank- and lender-based guaranteed student loan program beginning in July 2010, originating all loans in the government's direct loan program and requiring lenders and other contractors to compete to "service" (collect) the loans once issued. This proposal was immediately attacked by lenders and Republican lawmakers who have historically supported the private-sector program and opposed excessive government takeover of student lending.
- Make permanent the \$2,500 tax credit for families' college spending (including books and computer expenses) that Congress enacted as part of the economic stimulus

package this month. Unlike the current Hope tax credit, which the newly created credit was designed to replace temporarily for 2009 and 2010, the "American Opportunity Tax Credit," as the administration is calling it, is partially refundable, which means that it will be available even to people from lower-income families that do not pay sufficient taxes to qualify for existing college tax breaks.

- Revamp the Perkins Loan Program to make its loans available to significantly more students at significantly more colleges, using significantly different criteria for awarding them. While that sounds like a uniformly good thing, previous proposals to alter the Perkins program have run into opposition from the institutions that have historically benefited the most from the status quo -- especially four-year private colleges and public universities that get the most money from formulas that reward institutions based on their longevity in the program and, to an extent, on how high their tuitions are.

- Create a \$2.5 billion "access and completion incentive program" (\$500 million a year for five years) that would give grants to states and other entities to pay for programs designed to increasing students' success in college, with a particular focus on students from low-income and other disadvantaged backgrounds.

- Provide level funds for almost all other Education Department sponsored college programs, although the department would provide small increases in discretionary funds for several programs for minority-serving colleges to make up for mandatory funds from 2008 and 2009 that expire this year.

- Provide \$6 billion in new funds in 2010 for cancer research through the National Institutes of Health, part of the Obama administration's effort to double such spending.

- Give \$950 million more funds to the National Science Foundation than it received in 2008, to a total of just over \$7 billion, part of an effort to double funding for the basic research over 10 years.

- Increase funds for the Corporation for National Service by \$261 million, in large part to start down the path of increasing the number of AmeriCorps national service participants to 250,000 from the current 75,000 a year.

- Spend \$17.5 million more on the National Endowment for the Humanities, although \$10 million of that money would be so the endowment could take over an arts program now operated by another federal agency.

Below is a table containing detailed information on how major higher education programs would fare in the president's 2009 budget:

Program	2008 Appropriation (000s)	2009 Appropriation (000s)	2010 Request (000s)
Pell Grants (discretionary)	\$14,215,000	\$17,288,000	\$0
Pell Grants (mandatory)	2,030,000	2,090,000	28,654,059

Pell Grants (Recovery Act)	0	\$17,114,000	0
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#Includes \$887 million postponed from 2009 to 2010.

The table below includes funding levels proposed by the Obama administration for research and education at key science agencies and programs (in millions), according to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy:

Agency	2008 Appropriation	2009 Appropriation	Recovery Act	2010 Request
National Institutes of Health	\$28,412	\$29,615	\$9,603	\$30,766
Energy Department	6,641	7,093	1,142	6,906
National Science Foundation (research)	4,124	4,445	2,000	4,900