

## A Legacy to Overcome

### The University of Georgia hopes to become a more desirable destination for black students

By Don Campbell

ATHENS, GEORGIA

**A**UBREY JOHNSON knew she wanted to attend the University of Georgia since she was five. “I didn’t really know what it was,” the black UGA junior recalls, “but I was walking around saying: ‘I’m going to UGA.’” Her parents encouraged the notion by buying her UGA T-shirts and stuffed bulldogs, the school mascot.

In her sophomore year at mostly white North Gwinnett High School in suburban Atlanta, Johnson began to draw the interest of colleges and universities around the country. “Michigan was calling me all the time, and sending me letters,” she said. “But I didn’t want to go to Michigan; I wanted to go to UGA.”

So she applied to UGA and received an acceptance letter that arrived at her home in the little town of Sugar Hill, Georgia, on January 22, 2002. She remembers that date as one of the happiest of her life.

Tameisha Moore, also a black UGA ju-

nior, grew up in another small town—Shellman, in rural southwest Georgia. She attended the mostly black Randolph Clay High School and applied to UGA the same year as Johnson. Although friends and even her high school counselor ad-

*The University of Georgia continues to lag behind other flagship public universities in the South in recruiting and enrolling black students.*

vised her to set her sights lower, her ambition was rewarded when she, too, was accepted by UGA.

Johnson and Moore share more than skin color and an enthusiasm for the Uni-



The University of Georgia made no effort to recruit freshmen Tameisha Moore (left) or Aubrey Johnson, despite their excellent high school records.



CHRIS STANFORD, BLACK STAR, FOR CROSSTALK

versity of Georgia. Despite being the hottest commodity in higher education—high-achieving African Americans—neither was recruited by UGA. That they got in on their own is a good news story that, ironically, illustrates the problems that this university continues to face as it lags behind other flagship public universities in

the South in recruiting and enrolling black students.

More than three years after a federal appeals court struck down the school’s race-conscious admissions policy, UGA’s black enrollment is stuck at 5.3 percent, roughly half the percentage of black en-

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## Oklahoma’s Brain Gain

### A comprehensive drive to increase the percentage of state residents with college degrees

By Pamela Burdman

NORMAN, OKLAHOMA

**S**ENIORS!” You are almost there!” reads the bold caption above the black-and-white image of a female student sprinting toward the ten-yard line, cap balanced on her head, gown billowing in the wind. Smaller print below provides details about deadlines to apply for gradu-

*“Our focus is on making it cool to go to college.”*

—DOLORES MIZE,  
 AN OKLAHOMA HIGHER  
 EDUCATION OFFICIAL

ation. The ad, sponsored by the University of Oklahoma, appeared in *The Oklahoma Daily* last spring.

“Do you want to earn a million dollars?” asked another ad. “Graduate! In the course of their careers, college graduates earn \$1 million more than their peers without degrees.”

At Rose State College, near Oklahoma City, the campaign goes by the name, “Finish What You Start.” Glossy posters underscore the value of receiving an associate’s degree: “Don’t Stop Short,” “Picture You Getting Your Degree!” and “Atta Girl!” are among the slogans sported by smartly dressed mannequins. Another, with the simple caption, “Wow!” shows a wide-eyed young man staring at a wad of cash.

At high schools around the state, young people are greeted by posters (“Can’t Afford College? Yes You Can!”) offering information about the state’s need-based scholarship program, and plugging an 800 line to counsel students about going to college. Another series, targeting middle school students, features space alien Kyra promoting the importance of studying.

“Our focus is on making it cool to go to college,” said Associate Vice Chancellor Dolores Mize, who oversees K–16 initiatives for Oklahoma. The effort is receiving high marks: In a study of 86 social marketing campaigns targeting high school and middle school students, the Pathways to College Network recognized Oklahoma as



Oklahoma education officials hope flashy posters, like this one from Rose State College, will persuade students to complete their degree programs.

“the best overall.”

To explain why college hasn’t been “cool” in a state where high school graduation rates exceed national averages, analysts look to the state’s large rural population, low per-capita income, and populist roots. “The history of the state supports

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## In This Issue



**M**ICHIGAN GOVERNOR Jennifer Granholm hopes to double the state’s college graduates by the year 2015, without sharp increases in higher education spending. (See page 3.)



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## NEWS FROM THE CENTER

# New Center Associates

**F**OURTEEN MID-CAREER PROFESSIONALS have been selected by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education as Program Associates for 2004-05. They include faculty members, administrators, legislative staff members and postsecondary education specialists. They will attend three formal meetings during the academic year and also will work with National Center staff members on a variety of projects.

The goal of the program, which receives financial support from the Ford Foundation, is to engage scholars, leaders and prospective leaders in the study of higher education policy issues. ♦



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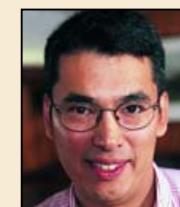
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PHOTOS BY DENNIS BRACK, BLACK STAR, FOR CROSSTALK

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# More to the Story

Editor—We are writing to comment on your article, “A Mixed Blessing? Critics object to Mississippi’s settlement of a 1975 anti-segregation lawsuit involving the state’s ‘historically black universities’” (*National CrossTalk*, Summer 2004). While shedding light on the “desegregation” of the historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in Mississippi, the article could also mislead readers about the extent to which colleges and universities in the 19 southern and southern-border states are providing equal educational opportunity to blacks.

Our comments draw, in part, from preliminary findings of a two-year study entitled, “Race equity and diversity in public higher education in the South,” that the Lumina Foundation for Education began funding in January 2004. The co-principal investigators for the project, all faculty in the higher education program at the University of Maryland, College Park, are the four signatories of this letter: Sharon Fries-Britt, Jeffery Milem, Laura Perna and John Williams.

In several instances, the author of the article, Kay Mills, makes statements that would lead many readers to inappropriately conclude that we do not need to be concerned with the college enrollment patterns of blacks in the South. While data that Mills presents are correct, they do not tell the entire story.

First, although the rate of increase in college enrollment was faster for blacks than for whites during the 1990s in all 19 southern and southern-border states, blacks continue to be underrepresented among college enrollments relative to their representation among high school graduates in each of the states. Mills notes that blacks represent 13 percent of students at the University of Mississippi and 37

percent of students at Delta State University, but fails to provide the reference point that is necessary to evaluate the adequacy of these shares.

Our analyses of data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System show that, between 1991 and 2000, the number of first-time full-time freshmen enrolled at public four-year non-HBCUs in Mississippi increased by 15 percent. Despite this growth, blacks continue to be underrepresented among first-time full-time freshmen (22 percent) and bachelor’s degree recipients (15 percent) at these institutions, relative to their representation among public high school graduates (47 percent). Blacks received only 11 percent of the bachelor’s degrees awarded in 2001 at the public flagship institution, the University of Mississippi. This pattern occurs in each of the 19 states.

Second, the statement that “Only 28 percent of black students in the South now attend historically black institutions,” suggests that blacks are no longer concentrated in the HBCUs. However, our data show that the HBCUs enroll 28 percent of blacks but only five percent of all students in these states. Moreover, the representation of blacks among first-time full-time freshmen exceeds 90 percent at all the HBCUs in 15 of the 19 southern and southern-border states. Although the HBCUs in West Virginia are now majority white (as stated in the article), this pattern is the exception, rather than the rule (a critical omitted caveat).

Third, simply labeling the eight states that are no longer subject to oversight from the federal courts or the Office of Civil Rights as “desegregated” ignores the continued gaps in educational opportunity that exist in these

states. For example, after design and implementation of several state desegregation plans, North Carolina has been ruled in compliance with federal law by OCR. Nonetheless, blacks continued to represent substantially smaller shares of both first-time freshmen (23 percent) and bachelor’s degree recipients (nine percent) at public four-year non-HBCUs than of public high school graduates (27 percent). At the state’s flagship institution, the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, blacks received only nine percent of the bachelor’s degrees awarded in 2001.

The University of Georgia, another flagship institution, provides an additional example of an institution that has continued to struggle in enrolling black students, even though the school, along with the rest of the state’s system of higher education, was ruled in compliance with Title VI by OCR in 1989. In 2001, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals prohibited the use of racial preferences in freshman admissions at the institution. After the decision, applications by black students fell by almost 40 percent. In 2003, black students comprised less than six percent of students enrolled at the university.

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# Battling the Past

## Michigan's governor emphasizes education to move the state beyond its industrial roots

By Carl Irving

LANSING, MICHIGAN

**G**OVERNOR JENNIFER Granholm hopes to move her state away from its past as home to the world's biggest automobile factories. To return to prosperity, she has offered an ambitious proposal: to double the number of college degrees awarded in the state—222,000 more by 2015.

"The case should be obvious," Granholm said in a recent interview. "To be able to compete in the 21st century world economy, we must increase from the present 22 percent who hold degrees. Cities, the legislature and higher ed must be fully committed, because there's a strong collective need."

After six months of study, a commission appointed by Granholm has concluded that nothing is more important to Michigan's future economic growth than a well-educated citizenry. And the way to achieve that is by doubling the number of college graduates over the next ten years, the commission said in a report that was released late last year.

"If we achieve this goal, Michigan will win the race for economic growth and prosperity," Granholm said in endorsing the commission's findings. "This report makes it clear that our state's path to a robust economy, with good-paying 21st century jobs, requires all our residents to complete their education beyond high school."

Granholm, the first Democrat to hold the office here in 15 years, clearly has faith that Michigan's citizens and educators will respond voluntarily, since Michigan public higher education is highly decentralized and there is no statewide body to implement the governor's ideas. Insiders say that the goals will be met mostly by voluntary

collective efforts, aided by private fundraising. Ultimately, it is hoped, there will be supportive legislation, even though both houses have Republican majorities.

Asked about public funding, the governor conceded that "fiscal constraints may impact our speed, but they should not change our course...I'm confident that as the public learns more about the connection between higher education and job creation, there will be strong support for this agenda."

In a recent press conference at the capitol here, Granholm warned that "we have to change the image of the state, from be-

**Proposed reforms will seek to provide a "guarantee" that those who qualify for higher education will get financial support.**

ing a rust-belt state, to the most advanced and creative in the country."

Granholm, 45, is Michigan's first woman governor, elected in 2002 after serving four years as the state's first woman attorney general. She is, perhaps, the only governor of a state, past or present, to have won a beauty and talent contest—"Miss San Carlos" (California), after which she decided to try for a Hollywood acting career.

Granholm graduated from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, in Los Angeles, but never got a part, according to the 2004 *Almanac of American Politics*. Nor did she care much for Los Angeles. "It was a very selfish place to be," she once told the *Detroit Free Press*. "To be in an environment where I was not using my intellect or (was not) expected to, was very disturbing."

Granholm returned to San Carlos and entered UC Berkeley, where she graduated summa cum laude in French and political science. After that came law school (Harvard) and eight years as a federal prosecutor, where her conviction rate is said to have been 98 percent. In 1998 Granholm made her successful race for Michigan attorney general.

The governor faces a formidable task in trying to reverse Michigan's steady slide into "rust belt" status. Like many other states that once prospered amid heavy industry, Michigan has lost a lot of ground. The jobless rate exceeds seven percent—nearly one-third more than the national average. Michigan loses far more young, college-educated people than it gains—nearly half of the state's graduates leave between the ages of 22 and 29. It ranks a dismal 45th in the country in attracting others like them from out

of state. Only two cities, Ann Arbor and Grand Rapids, have growing populations.

More than a fourth of Michigan's high school students, and half of those who enroll in the state's public community colleges and universities, drop out before graduation—a massive problem. School districts in several areas, especially in Detroit and Flint, face growing deficits.

Reforms proposed from kindergarten through college will seek to reduce the number of dropouts by providing a "guarantee" that those who qualify for higher education will get financial support.

"We must focus on keeping them enrolled, to increase our workforce of certified graduates," Granholm said. "We must make sure that our universities are part of this, not just labs in ivory towers, but with expanding operations. Universities must be full partners...in building a creative workforce that can attract out-of-state business."

The reforms drafted by the Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth, appointed by Granholm and chaired by Lt. Governor John Cherry, seek to link degree granting programs to "emerging business needs," make profitable use of campus research, and begin "partnerships between public education and private business." The report envisions regions emerging in Michigan that will resemble those near Boston, in California's Silicon Valley and in North Carolina, where high tech industries have sprung up near research universities.

"To have a prayer of participating in today's economy at the same standard of living we have been used to, we have to fuel that with a better-educated people and be a center for new knowledge and job creation," said John C. Austin, policy director for the commission.

Some special funds already have been allocated to this cause:

\$100 million to spur research and industry related to the life sciences, funded by proceeds from a settlement with the tobacco industry. Another such fund is sought for so-called "smart zones," with 18 community colleges as centers for workers and bosses to upgrade their skills.

But at the heart of the commission's proposals is the opening vow: "[to] forge a new compact with residents: an expectation that all students will achieve a postsecondary degree or credential coupled with a guarantee from the state of financial support linked to the achievement of that goal."

Some question whether such sweeping pledges can have any real hope in Michigan. "She's thrown her proposal into



**John Austin was policy director of the commission that recommended Michigan should adopt a goal of "postsecondary education for all."**

a wilderness without resources," said one sympathetic but doubtful Michigan academic veteran. Others interviewed doubt that either the public or the overwhelmingly Republican legislature will support the governor's proposals.

Austin admits the challenges include what he terms the "hangover in many people's minds that 'yeah, we could get a decent-paying job with a high school education.' But that pattern is broken and we're not going to be the home for mass production, manufacturing jobs...There are other places in the world where they are going to do that."

Granholm's ideas have drawn praise from Virginia Governor Mark Warner, chairman of the National Governors Association,

**"If Michigan wants to get out of its past, it needs to take risks, and we have a governor willing to take risks."**

**—AL LORENZO, PRESIDENT OF MACOMB COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

who said that "governors understand that future economic prosperity depends on the quality of their educational pipelines." More importantly, many Michigan business and education leaders believe Granholm will find support among voters who are worried about the state's shrinking economy.

"There is no more important statement we make about how critical secondary education is to Michigan, to make college access possible," said Al Lorenzo, president

*continued next page*



**Michigan State University President Lou Anna Simon believes the state's three research universities should collaborate more often.**

PHOTOS BY SANTA FABIO, BLACK STAR FOR CROSSTALK

## MICHIGAN

from preceding page

of Macomb community college north of Detroit. "If Michigan wants to get out of its past, it needs to take risks, and we have a governor willing to take risks."

The commission's proposals, endorsed by the governor, face a fundamental obstacle: public doubt about the value of higher education. It is a sentiment often echoed here and elsewhere in recent years, Lt. Governor Cherry, said in an interview. "A large percentage nationally doesn't agree that one needs a degree to succeed, and Michigan is a microcosm of the nation. We're like a canary in a coal mine," he said.

Cherry's 41-member commission, which included business and labor leaders

***An immediate challenge for Granholm's proposals will be a fundamental obstacle: public doubt about the value of higher education.***

as well as educators, declared that any hope for a prosperous future required "the courage to set and achieve within the next ten years a new expectation for learning: postsecondary education for all."

The commission called on the State Board of Education to provide a new, rigorous "high school curricular framework" so high school graduates will be better prepared for college, and proposed that a new high school assessment program, "an accepted test for college readiness," should be developed by the 2007-08 school year.

A related proposal calls for "dual enrollment" by high school students taking college-level courses. The Presidents Council for the State Universities of Michigan (a loose confederation of the public four-year universities in a state with only a handful of small private campuses) recommends a "core course of study" including English, science, foreign language and social studies, adding up to 19 credits, equal to about a year in college. The goal is for half of all high school students to be enrolled in college courses by 2015. Even in those schools that are "most academically challenged," the target should be at least ten percent.

The commission also urged community colleges to award Associate of Arts degrees to students who have moved on to a four-year campus before completing their community college work.

"We need to encourage that, with a letter of congratulations," said Paula Cunningham, president of 20,000-student Lansing Community College. "It raises awareness about making education available, with some guarantee for access. It's something we can do even without money."

The commission also recommended that students be provided with better information about what it takes to get into

college, such as correct information about college costs—often far less than parents believe. National surveys find that many families think it takes \$30,000 to \$40,000 to pay for a year of college, when the actual cost is much lower on most campuses. (The national average total cost of a year in college, for the academic year 2003-04—including tuition, fees and room and board but not taking into account financial aid—was \$7,561 for two-year community colleges; \$10,478 for public four-year institutions; and \$25,023 for four-year private schools.)

And the commission called on campuses to single out for recruiting those high schools where 20 percent or fewer of the students currently go on to college.

As Granholm notes, only 22 percent of Michigan adults possess any kind of college degree—about two percent below the national average.

"We did very well with low-skilled jobs during the last century," said Lt. Governor Cherry, who grew up in Flint, which was a thriving center for automobile production until the crash in the 1980s. "In spite of that, the state built up an enormously successful higher education system," said Cherry, a graduate of the University of Michigan.

Cherry and others hope that Michigan will live up to the noble vow expressed by its pioneers 150 years ago, when they passed an act proclaiming that the state would be "good enough for the proudest, and cheap enough for the poorest."

Governor Granholm's commission also recommended that the state:

- Set high expectations for high school students through rigorous standards and curriculum, focus on low-income communities, and help high school teachers become more effective in the classroom.
- Help and encourage wavering college students to stay with their studies and earn degrees. Reach out to prospective students in rural and remote areas, and build closer ties between the two-year colleges and the four-year universities.
- Increase postgraduate studies and business internships for students and faculty. Reach out to at least half of the state's 1.5 million adults with limited college training to help them return to complete degree work, and make more room on campus for increased enrollments.
- Apply research and development talent to help existing industry expand, through new innovations, products and technologies. Align graduate studies with economic needs and opportunities, and organize and fund partnerships between business and campus.
- Develop a lifelong education tracking system.

The commission cited evidence that a more efficient public higher education system, producing more graduates at both two-year and four-year schools, would produce a substantial financial reward. In 1999, for instance, the state's \$1.5 billion appropriation to higher education had a net impact of \$39 billion; for each dollar of state support, the universities collectively generated \$26 of economic impact.

Although he supports most of the proposals, former University of Michigan President James J. Duderstadt sees large obstacles ahead. "Since earliest days of our frontier state, there has been deep public suspicion of state government, and so the campuses became virtually autonomous," he said in an interview. "We have two world-class research universities (UM and Michigan State) but no coordination among the 15 public four-year institutions."

Duderstadt, who served as UM president from 1988 to 1996 and now heads national studies on federal research, higher education and information technology, added, "We have a particular challenge in the midwest, because our workforce is obsolete. We have to invest in a new knowledge infrastructure."

The University of Michigan has moved in the only sensible direction, Duderstadt believes, by "redefining what they mean by a public university that's privately supported, generating resources from the marketplace and managing them in ways differing from what we did before." UM's state allocations have dropped below eight percent of the total campus budget of \$4.2 billion, he noted, with most of the resources now coming from outside the state via research, \$25,000 out-of-state tuition charges, private support, and Medicare and Medicaid payments.

But he regrets that states like Michigan and Virginia have pushed their flagship campuses so far in this direction. "We have public policies that are turning us into a campus for the rich. UM students now

***Michigan loses far more young, college-educated people than it gains—nearly half of the state's graduates leave between the ages of 22 and 29.***

come from families with an average income of \$100,000 a year," and financial aid for low-income students is inadequate.

Duderstadt predicts it will be 20 to 30 years (as "the baby boomers pass on through") before state governments once again become more generous to higher education. But he still hopes, in line with Governor Granholm's goals, that the state "will come to grips with the reality that



***Paula Cunningham, president of Lansing Community College, supports the major recommendations of the governor's Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth.***

we're in a different era now—investing in infrastructure and markets, linking campuses, sharing courses and libraries, and putting more state tax dollars into need-based financial aid."

The University of Michigan's thriving home town, Ann Arbor, is loaded with research activity that has worldwide impact, providing a prime model for the rest of the state's communities and their campuses.

UM's greatest contributions, say commission planners, might involve attracting highly skilled people and investment from around the world to adjacent research and industry operations. "Our universities are critical components in creating the environment that will attract and retain a younger generation," UM President Mary Sue Coleman said.

Coleman cited a study alleging that 1.5 jobs are created for every UM job in place. In one year (2000-01), UM teaching, research and private contributions attracted about \$2.3 billion in personal income. No other Michigan campus comes close to such totals, according to university officials.

Michigan State University's president, Lou Anna Simon, said she and Coleman had agreed that they, along with Wayne State University, in Detroit—Michigan's third research campus—should find ways to "partner much more effectively," and have "a more positive impact on the state than any one of us could have by ourselves." The three campuses already have established a cooperative computer information system. And MSU and UM share library catalogs online with other universities in the Big Ten plus the University of Chicago.

*continued on page 7*

# Math Emporium

The use of technology has changed the way Virginia Tech's introductory math classes are taught

By Kay Mills

BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA

IT IS 8:30 on a Tuesday night. Students pile out of the shuttle bus from the nearby Virginia Tech campus and head into the University Mall. But this is not what you think—they are going there to do course work, take quizzes or study at the Math Emporium, formerly a Rose's department store anchoring one end of the shopping center.

The Math Emporium is both a place and a concept. It has changed the way nearly a dozen Virginia Tech math classes are taught, while saving the university

*At the Math Emporium help is available from math faculty, graduate students or other undergraduates, most days and nights.*

money. On this particular evening, 314 students have checked in to use some of the 531 computers in the cavernous room.

Three courses—mostly for first- and second-year students—are now online and are based at the emporium. Unlike the experience of taking courses entirely online, these students can meet with their teachers if they wish, and all graded work must be completed at the emporium, not on students' own computers.

Enrollment in these courses totaled 4,000 last fall. One reason for the large numbers is that every Virginia Tech student must satisfy a "Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning" requirement, and 98

percent do so by taking a math class.

Eight years ago such huge enrollments led the math department at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and University (the school's full name) to explore better ways of teaching than simply "putting anyone with a pulse in charge of a class," as John Rossi, the current math department chairman, put it. Since then, several other universities—particularly the University of Alabama and the University of Idaho—have established similar programs.

The math emporium was part of the first round of course redesign projects assisted by a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts, through what is now called the National Center for Academic Transformation, in Troy, New York. Carol Twigg, the center's executive director, said the Virginia Tech project was so successful that it has been adopted as a model for future efforts to utilize technology in the teaching of large introductory courses.

Some Virginia Tech students have complained about not having a teacher in a classroom. But Chuck Hodges, math emporium manager and a former math instructor, responds, "No, you've got a dozen." Help is available from math faculty, graduate students or other undergraduates, most days and nights. The emporium itself is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, during the academic year. To summon help, all a student needs to do is place a very low-tech red plastic cup on top of the computer.

"Before, students had me 50 minutes, three times a week, plus my office hours," Hodges said. "If a student for some reason did not mesh with my teaching, he was

sort of stuck. Here, there is an enormous opportunity for different styles of help."

Asked why the emporium approach works, math department chairman Rossi said, "I hate to use jargon but I think it's active learning. We are forcing them to do the work. If they don't do the work, they'll flunk. It's not like sitting in the back of a class of 500 and doing your e-mail." Nonetheless, Rossi still receives messages from parents who complain that they are paying all that tuition (undergraduate in-state tuition at Virginia Tech is \$5,838 this year), yet their child doesn't have a teacher. "I reply by asking, 'How much personal attention do you think your child gets in an introductory psychology class?'"

Three courses are taught entirely at the emporium: college algebra and trigonometry, differential calculus and introductory linear algebra. Another half dozen math courses have an emporium component.

Before going to the emporium, students can check its website to see how many computers are in use. Sometimes there are lines, so the website warns, "It is your responsibility to arrive early enough to meet your deadlines."

Students entering the emporium show their university identification cards and are assigned a computer if they want to use one. However, many students come just to study, because the emporium is quieter than their dorms or because parking is more plentiful.

"A typical math emporium session consists of logging into a computer, then logging into the testing system to take a quiz or exam," said Terri Bourdon, the instructor who manages both the college algebra and trigonometry course and the differential calculus course. Many students also do their course work at the emporium. They log onto the computer and click the link for their course on the emporium homepage. Students can take practice quizzes to prepare for the graded quizzes, and Bourdon said "most of the questions that the emporium staff answers come from the practice quizzes."

Bourdon said she does not put the en-

tire course online immediately, so students will pace themselves. But after the first few weeks, all aspects of the course are available all the time.

Exams are proctored and are given at the back of the former department store, in an area where garden tools once were sold. Quizzes are not proctored, and students are expected to follow the same honor code policy on quizzes as on exams. Bourdon explained that proctored exams are weighted much more heavily in the students' grades than the quizzes, "so there is not a serious concern about cheating on the non-proctored quizzes."

Bourdon, a math instructor at Virginia Tech since 1977, has managed the college algebra and trigonometry course for two years, the differential calculus course for three. Last fall about 2,100 students were enrolled in her classes.

"I did have misgivings," she said. "I said I would do it for one year because I expected to lose what I went into teaching

*"If they don't do the work, they'll flunk. It's not like sitting in the back of a class of 500 and doing your e-mail."*

—JOHN ROSSI, VIRGINIA TECH MATH DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN

for"—that is, personal contact with students. "I also enjoy explaining concepts in a lecture format, so I was afraid that I would miss that even more. As it turns out, I have been pleasantly surprised. I have even more personal contact with students, primarily due to the fact that students seem more comfortable asking for help at the math emporium than they do in a faculty office. And I enjoy explaining concepts in this environment since I am talking to students who have already

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Most Virginia Tech students take introductory math classes at the Math Emporium, a computer lab located in a former department store near the campus.

PHOTOS BY JAY PAUL, BLACK STAR, FOR CROSSTALK



John Rossi, chairman of the Virginia Tech math department, thinks students learn more at the Math Emporium than in traditional classrooms.

**from preceding page**

worked through the materials beforehand.”

Student reaction to the math emporium is mixed. On the plus side, Soly Alvarez, from Bogota, Colombia, a junior in industrial and systems engineering, took linear algebra there in fall 2002 and was pleased with the experience. “I think the math emporium was a positive experience, because I was able to work at my own pace, go back, reread the material, take the practice quizzes as many times as I wanted to. And I was able to work from my dorm room or go to the math emporium if I preferred.

“Also, it served as an opportunity to develop self-discipline skills, letting me organize my time and not having to attend class at a certain time but rather move

**“I think the emporium is a good idea but one that could be greatly improved by locating it on campus.”**

—MATTHEW VETTING,  
A JUNIOR AT VIRGINIA TECH

around my schedule to accommodate other assignments,” she added. Once Alvarez completed linear algebra, she continued to go to the emporium to study for other math classes or to get help from the aides.

Not everyone has such positive reactions. Said freshman Hunter Simmons, of Fincastle, Virginia, who is taking linear algebra and calculus, “It is saving money but I don’t think the savings are worth what it does.” Simmons said he had a great math background in high school and thinks the software computing program used in his emporium classes is “a complete waste of time.” He would like another day in the classroom, to reinforce concepts, rather

than use that program.

In theory, Simmons said, the emporium “really works well. But it’s hard to get to, it’s depressing to be in, and quite often you can’t get help when you need it.” He said the huge room, which is painted a shade of white, could be made more attractive. “We’re at Virginia Tech—make it orange and maroon, everything else is orange and maroon. You could make it more inviting.”

One of the biggest gripes is the emporium’s location, across a busy street and a long hike from the center of campus. The university regularly runs shuttle buses to the emporium—theoretically it’s a ten-minute ride, but sometimes it takes longer, and the buses are crowded.

Christie Roark, from Alpharetta, Georgia, a senior engineering major, objects to having courses “taught completely on the computer at the math emporium. It takes up a lot of time to ride a bus out there, sit at a computer and do something that really you should have been able to do from a computer anywhere else on campus.” For on-campus students “it’s really inconvenient,” she said. Roark never took a course that was entirely emporium-based. “That was by design,” she said. “I planned it that way.”

Roark and some other students do not like the fact that all the computers at the emporium are Macintoshes. “Engineers are required to purchase and use PCs for school, so having to switch over to a Macintosh at the math emporium is really just an annoyance and doesn’t make sense,” Roark said. Software incompatibility sometimes makes it impossible to write a paper at the emporium and e-mail it to a professor, she added.

Chuck Hodges, the emporium manager, explained that Macs are used because they are cheaper, “considering the whole package—security (fewer virus problems), maintenance” and so on. He said there were complaints about an earlier Mac version but few now.

Matthew Vetting, a junior industrial en-



**Math professor Mike Williams says state budget cuts are one reason Virginia Tech turned to the computer lab solution for large-enrollment math classes.**

gineering major from Harrisonburg, Virginia, summed up the feelings of many students: “I think the emporium is a good idea but one that could be greatly improved by locating it on campus.”

Virginia Tech professors and administrators say there was neither time nor money to build an on-campus facility in 1997, when the acute need for a large space developed. Had the computer-based courses taken over existing on-campus space, they say, other classrooms would have been displaced. By fall 1998, the emporium’s second year of operation, it had freed up space in 64 classrooms, each with a 40-student capacity, and another 12 classrooms with a 100-student capacity.

Also, officials say, an on-campus facility would have cost about \$19 a square foot to build, while the mall department store could be leased for about \$1 a square foot.

State budget cuts also played a role. Virginia Tech’s state support was reduced by \$72 million during the 2002 and 2003 fiscal years. “The pressures, forces and influences that led to this are at least 15 years old,” said Mike Williams, a math professor and a former university associate vice president. “We’ve not been treated very well by state financing.” With personnel cutbacks, “the faculty was being squeezed big time in what they had to deliver,” Williams said. So some administrators and faculty members started looking at ways to make better use of technology.

Among academics, Williams said, “change comes hard. Everything is fought over. The smaller the issue, the bigger the fight.” In the early 1990s the university started to prepare faculty for transitions in technology. Once the math department saw what could be accomplished with computers, its labs began to be crowd-

ed. That was a good pressure but one that had to be relieved, Williams said.

Virginia Tech, with a current enrollment of about 25,600 at the Blacksburg campus, promised the state to take more students by 2010, with no increase in state funding, said Anne Moore, associate vice president for learning technologies. From

**“My view is that the lecture is not worthwhile. But there are those who are very prideful about their material, being the ‘sage on the stage.’”**

—MIKE WILLIAMS, A VIRGINIA  
TECH MATH PROFESSOR

1992 to 1995, the additional students did not arrive. But in 1996 enrollment jumped, whether through admissions office miscalculations or other reasons, and the math labs were overflowing. “People were wanting to get off a burning platform” and knew something had to be done, Moore said. The math emporium was the answer.

Comparing costs of traditional classroom teaching and emporium-based classes is difficult, math professor Mike Williams said. For example, when math faculty wrote the software for the college algebra and trigonometry course, they made it a bit more difficult than before, so comparing results would be like comparing apples and oranges.

Student performance has improved since the emporium opened. In fall 1997, the first year for the redesigned linear algebra course, 68 percent of the students received C grades or better. By fall 2002, 90 percent were earning at least a C.

The student success rate also has im-

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**Senior Christie Roark, an engineering major, thinks the Math Emporium is inconvenient; she avoids it as much as possible.**

proved at the University of Alabama, which established a Mathematics Technology Learning Center, modeled on the Virginia Tech emporium. In fall 1999, only 40 percent of students taking traditional math classes were earning grades of C-minus or better, but after three years of the technology-based approach, that has increased to 60 percent.

Early on, some Virginia Tech math professors were skeptical about computer-based courses. "I think they saw it as something that would change the ultimate outcome, that it was more of a gimmick than substance," said Robert Bates, then dean of arts and sciences at the Blacksburg school, now provost and academic vice president at Washington State University. "Some would say that our classes had gotten too big and if we would just go back to smaller classes, we could educate students." But "some students need individual attention; some don't," he added. "Some can move faster through the material. If we can individualize the students' experience, we can teach them better."

"What is (traditional) teaching?" asked Mike Williams. "It's 40 to 80 students in a room. A broadcast, not unlike watching TV. A very passive act. The majority are zoned within 20 minutes. My view is that the lecture is not worthwhile. But there are those who are very prideful about their material, being the 'sage on the stage.'"

One instructor with many students is highly inefficient, Williams added. "What we have now is one-to-one. We train our helpers to be good listeners, not to solve the problem for the student but to figure out the right question to make the light go on. The work of discovery changes a per-



JAY PAUL, BLACK STAR FOR CROSSTALK

**Chuck Hodges, the Math Emporium manager, says faculty or graduate student assistance is available to undergraduates who have problems with online instruction.**

son's brain. We try to understand exactly what it is the student doesn't understand."

Teaching methods have not changed in upper-level courses, according to Williams. "I am not sure this would be worth doing for courses of less than 500 students," he said. "There are about eight courses for which this works. Of 11,500 math enrollments, 8,000 are registered at the emporium for some activity that requires grading."

Virginia Tech has been in one financial crisis after another in the last decade because of state budget cuts and tuition freezes. Meantime, said Provost Dixon Hanna, the math department was struggling because of the university's large engi-

neering and science enrollments. "The math department here is much larger than at most institutions, and it was struggling getting its classes taught." Under these circumstances the department was willing to take a chance on the emporium.

In order to succeed with the emporium approach, "you really have to have people who believe in it, who are willing to do almost anything to keep it from falling on the floor," said Monte Boisen, who helped start the project at Virginia Tech and now is math department chairman at the University of Idaho. "It requires an amazing amount of commitment." Frustrations can abound when software doesn't work as it is supposed to, or, as happened soon after

the Virginia Tech emporium opened, someone plugged in a vacuum cleaner and shut down the electrical power supply completely.

The emporium project could not have succeeded without strong support from top campus administrators, including then-President Paul E. Torgersen. "We've always been very innovative about anything having to do with technology," said Torgersen, who was president from 1993 to 2000 and now teaches industrial engineering. "We were the first university to require PCs of all engineering freshmen."

Some other departments thought that math was getting undue attention—and money—and were not happy, Torgersen recalled. "Anytime you do some initiative, it comes at the expense of somebody else," he said. "If you just sit around and hand out money evenly, you'll never make

**Virginia Tech's state support was reduced by \$72 million during the 2002 and 2003 fiscal years.**

progress. Once you decide you're going to do this, you just do it. This was a train on a fast track and there was no way we were going to stop it." ♦

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

## MICHIGAN

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Grand Valley State University, a 21,000-student campus 150 miles west of Detroit, has been a model for the commission because of its cooperative moves in the past two years under President Mark Murray, who was state treasurer in the administration of Granholm's predecessor, Republican John Engler.

"A lot can change in ten years," said

**The governor's commission calls on campuses to single out for recruiting high schools where 20 percent or fewer students currently go on to college.**

Murray. "The governor deserves enormous credit for setting the bar high." He praised Granholm for "mobilizing counties, setting common goals, urban and suburban." He echoes the commission in predicting that Michigan can build on parts of its past as a "brain center for the world auto industry," with campuses providing graduates who can manage logistics, de-

signs and information technology.

There seems to be strong public support for Granholm's plan. Several supportive editorials have been published, including one in the *Detroit Free Press*, one of the state's major newspapers.

Still, the governor has many critics, who point out, for instance, that although the commission calls for expanding enrollments at Michigan's public campuses, it offers no specifics on how to provide the additional space that would be needed.

Lawrence E. Gladieux, a former Washington representative for the College Board, who has written extensively about admissions problems that bar the poor, is dubious about Michigan's plans to convince low-income families that their children actually face lower costs than they believe. "It may be impossible to do that, until college prices, tuition and fees, stop running ahead of inflation," he said.

"I personally think the attitude too often is, 'We're full up; we're doing all we can,'" said Gladieux. "I don't think higher education should get a 'bye in trying to deal with inequality that is growing in our society and the world. It's an open question whether higher ed is a force for increasing equality or heightening inequality."

But Austin, the Michigan commission's policy director, thinks that attitude has faded away in his state, as a result of the governor's efforts. "We're getting our higher education institutions to embrace completion as the goal, particularly among



**Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm believes the state's economic future depends on increasing the number of two-year and four-year college graduates.**

those who traditionally don't go to college," he said. "We're asking them to make it more affordable, to help reach out to high schools with low sending rates to college.

"We've got to get over the hangover that 'maybe we're doing OK in Michigan

and things will come around.' We've got to nurture understanding that it isn't coming around, and we need to change." ♦

*Freelance writer Carl Irving lives in the San Francisco Bay area.*

# Is Reading Dead?

## University-affiliated literary journals struggle to maintain funding as they compete for a shrinking audience

By Robert A. Jones

LEXINGTON, VA.

THERE'S A WHIFF of nostalgia as Rodney T. Smith recalls his early days at *Shenandoah*, the literary magazine published by Washington and Lee University. Hired as the editor in 1995, Smith would stroll to his off-campus offices, settle into a chair and worry about nothing except the next issue of *Shenandoah* and the authors who would fill its pages.

"The only conversation between the university and me about money was whether next year's budget would go up," Smith said. "It was like the university was

*The long-standing, cozy partnership between universities and literary magazines has begun to erode.*

the patron of the arts and *Shenandoah* was the provider of the arts. Both sides were content. I know I was."

When Smith was recruited from Auburn University, where he was a professor of English, the administration at Washington and Lee did, indeed, reward him with a sharp hike in the magazine's operating budget. On the personal side, Smith was told he would not have to teach. "They told me, 'Just make the magazine, that's enough,'" Smith recalled.

Over the last half century, this symbiosis between literary journal and university has become commonplace. Universities provide office space and funding for a journal, and, in return, the journal brings to the campus prestige and an exposure to the wider literary world. More than a dozen of the nation's best-known journals now operate under these auspices, from the *Kenyon Review* at Kenyon College in Ohio to the *Southern Review* at Louisiana State University.

These partnerships have come to play a central role in the literary life of the country. Since the decline of mass-market magazines, like *Collier's* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, the journals have become the vehicles that discover and publish upcoming authors. Jeffrey Lependorf, executive director of the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses in New York, says literary journals now publish 99 percent of all new poetry in this country and the vast majority of short stories.

But this long-standing, cozy partnership between universities and literary magazines has begun to erode. University presidents, watching their own budgets decline in recent years, have begun to look with jaundiced eyes at their literary offspring. Why, they ask, should they support an enterprise that does not contribute to the university's core goal of educating students?

Moreover, the literary world itself has lost purchase on many modern campuses. These days, the excitement is directed largely towards the sciences and professional schools where donors lavish funds on new buildings and professorships. The pursuit of arts and letters, on the other hand, is often treated as an after-thought, the quaint realm of Mr. Chips.

The actual cost of supporting a literary enterprise on campus is surprisingly modest. *Shenandoah's* current budget is \$187,000, which includes printing, distribution, and the salaries for Smith and his part-time managing editor, Lynn Leech. A recent informal review listed the budget of the *Southern Review* at \$338,000 and the *Sou'wester* at Southern Illinois University at \$28,000.

Of those sums, the universities pay anywhere from 70 to 90 percent, depending on revenues generated by the magazines. But modest or not, the costs make an attractive target to administrators who find themselves in a slash-and-burn period of budget cutting.

Here at Washington and Lee, that change in attitude has taken a sharp toll on *Shenandoah*. Over the past year the magazine has seen its publication schedule cut from four times a year to three, its offices moved to a semi-basement in the public relations building, and its budget reduced. As for editor Smith, he now teaches each semester in addition to his editing duties.

And far worse may be coming. The university has put the magazine on a virtual death watch as various administrators decide whether to continue funding at any level. The review, begun last year, will not be concluded for several more months.

For Smith, who looks very much the literary editor with flowing white hair and has the soft accent of his native North Carolina, the process has left him weary and frustrated. "People keep asking me how *Shenandoah* can become a business, and I'm not sure those things fit together very well," he said. "I want to ask them, how about the college library? How can the library become a business?"

Of course, financial distress is hardly a new condition among literary magazines. For generations, even the best-known publications have depended on benefactors to subsidize the inevitable deficits. In the 1950s and '60s, for example, the *Paris Review* made it clear who was paying the bills by listing the name of its publisher at the top of the masthead: Sadruddin Aga Khan.

"It's the fate of literary magazines to be small and poor," said Louis Rubin, the retired co-founder of Algonquin Books in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. "And that's probably for the best. If they become mass-market operations, they would be forced into a blockbuster mentality, which is not their job. Their job is to discover new talent, to publish writers that no one has heard of."

Nonetheless, the landscape has grown

more perilous since the 1950s, a period that some regard as the golden era of literary magazines. During those post-World War Two years, a half dozen magazines—the *Paris*, *Kenyon*, *Hudson* and *Southern* reviews, among others—dominated the scene and garnered unto themselves most of the literary attention and financial support.

"At the time, those magazines could provide recognition and prestige to an author just by publishing a short story," said Rubin. "People would open their copies of the *Southern Review* or the *Paris Review* to see who had been anointed, so to speak. That's not true today. Literary magazines don't play that role."

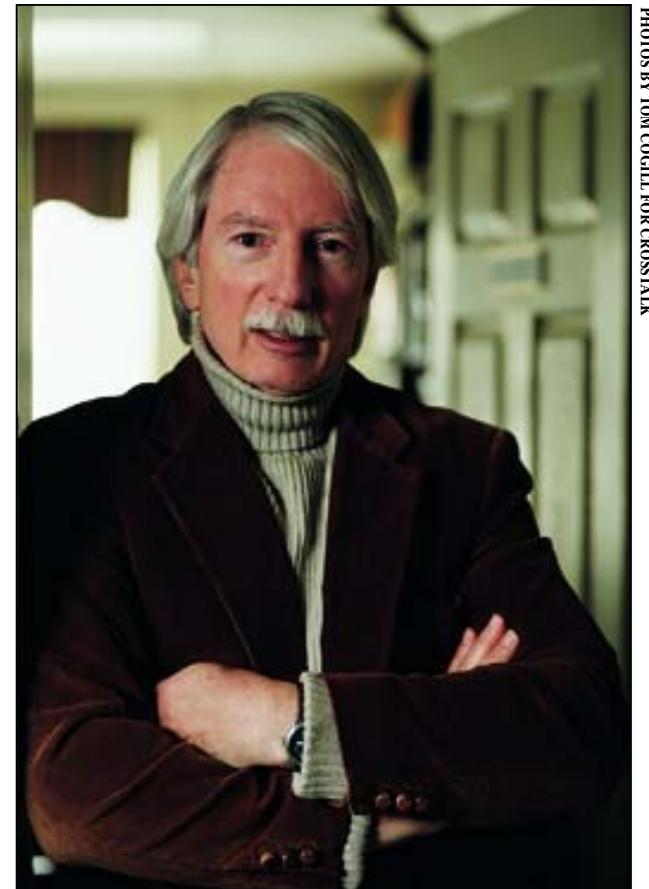
They don't, in part, because reading itself plays a lesser role than it did in the '50s. A recent NEA study found that literary reading has undergone dramatic decline in the country, with less than half of American adults now reading any form of literature. That study led the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, published at the University of Virginia, to display on its website the drawing of a young woman, her head hung in despair and a manuscript dangling from her hand, with the caption, "Reading is Dead."

"In the 1950s we had an emerging middle class that saw literature and reading as one of the hallmarks of the educated person," said one editor. "That's not true today. Reading has lost its power to bestow status on the masses, and instead has become a cottage industry."

Perhaps so, but within that cottage industry another phenomenon is having a powerful effect on the world of literary magazines. Namely, the sheer number of literary journals is exploding even as readership has declined. Rather than the half dozen dominant journals of the '50s, about 20 major journals are now published around the country, all competing for attention and readers.

But those numbers are dwarfed by the proliferation of secondary journals that have popped up in cities and hamlets across the land. The Council of Literary Magazines and Presses estimates that the total number of literary journals in the country has hit 1,000, the highest number in history. Some exist solely online; others are published cheaply with desktop technology and may last only for one or two issues. But even as one journal dies, two others take its place.

In fact, it could be argued that the present time, and not the '50s, represents the real golden era for literary magazines. Bellevue Hospital in New York, for exam-



Rodney T. Smith, editor of *Shenandoah*, is struggling to keep the literary journal alive in the face of budget cuts at Washington and Lee University.

ple, now publishes the *Bellevue Literary Review*. In Rochester, New York, a publication called *Hazmat Review* deals with poetry rather than noxious chemicals. Some journals publish only gay and lesbian literature; others accept only extra-long short stories; still others specialize in literature from certain neighborhoods in a given city.

What explains this burgeoning supply of literature in the midst of shrinking demand? Some veterans of the literary world believe the answer lies in the mushrooming culture of creative writing retreats and workshops that now churn out would-be writers by the thousands. The boom is occurring both inside universities and outside

*A recent NEA study found that literary reading has undergone dramatic decline, with less than half of American adults now reading any form of literature.*

at institutions such as Breadloaf in Vermont.

"If you browse through *Poets and Writers* (the trade journal of creative writing) you will be amazed at the number of ads for these workshops," said Shannon Ravenel, editor and co-founder of Algonquin Books. "They're everywhere. And when you create writers, you also create readers of a particular sort. I'm talking about a crowd that wants to be published in a literary journal, and a crowd that is interested in what other writers are doing."

Another veteran sees the phenomenon more cynically. "Every writer needs an out-

let," he said. "So you get tens of thousands of attendees at creative writing workshops looking for a journal to publish their one-and-only short story. If they can't find one, sometimes they simply create one to immortalize their work and their friends' work. In cases like this, the division between authors and readers is lost. Both sides are composed of the same people."

The burgeoning universe of journals may indicate a thriving creative culture in the country, but the phenomenon has not helped the older, established journals. "The pie is getting cut into smaller and smaller pieces," said David Lynn, editor of the *Kenyon Review*. "A good literary journal does not need to fight for authors. It needs to fight for readers. In general, literary magazines are in dire straights because readership is declining and many more publications are fighting for that readership."

The small circulation of the leading journals reflects the squeeze. Lynn's *Kenyon Review* has one of the genre's highest circulations at 3,940. *Shenandoah* comes in at 1,527, and the *Sawanee Review* at 2,460. The circulations of many journals are lower now than 20 years ago.

At Washington and Lee, these pressures were never anticipated when the university decided to sponsor a journal in 1950. The idea was suggested by two faculty members who argued that a campus journal would help raise the literary tone of the campus, much as journals had done at Vanderbilt and Kenyon. Washington and Lee's college dean agreed and soon the university had appointed a bright student named T.K. Wolfe as the first editor. He is now better known as writer Tom Wolfe.

Over time the magazine evolved from a student-run affair to a professional operation with national ambitions. *Shenandoah* never embraced the kinds of experimental fiction where, say, a short story would take the form of checked items on a grocery list. Rather, it kept a distinctly southern flavor and favored writers such as Eudora Welty, James Dickey, Reynolds Price and Anne Tyler.

By the time Smith arrived as editor in 1995, *Shenandoah* had emerged as one of the country's leading journals. In fact, Smith's recruitment amounted to a kind of statement about the magazine's position. In the past, editors had been chosen from the school's English department, and some had continued to teach while editing the magazine part-time. Smith, on the other hand, was hired full-time to put out the magazine.

By all accounts the magazine has thrived from a literary standpoint during Smith's tenure. His two compilations from *Shenandoah's* first 50 years—titled "Buck & Wing" and "Strongly Spent"—were widely praised, and Smith briefly was wooed to take over the *Southern Review* before deciding to remain with *Shenandoah*.

When *Shenandoah's* reversal of fortune came in 2003, its immediate cause had little to do with the magazine itself. Rather, the declining stock market had eroded Washington and Lee's endowment, sending the administration on a hunt for cost reduc-

tions. President Thomas G. Burish, who arrived just a year earlier, announced that future expenses at the university would be cut by \$5 million annually.

And there stood *Shenandoah*, not part of any academic department, looking very much like roadkill. "The university said if *Shenandoah* was being housed at the university, then the magazine should contribute to the life at the university," said Smith. "My initial response was that *Shenandoah* already contributed in a major way. It's one of the best-known institutions on the campus; it attracts writers to the university; it's one of the reasons people know about Washington and Lee."

Not wanting to rest on that argument, Smith and Managing Editor Lynn Leech fashioned a plan to win over the administration. An intern program was expanded; Smith began teaching each semester, and Leech began visiting with the English faculty and local high schools, urging teachers to use *Shenandoah* in their classes.

Smith even began a perverse but successful campaign to increase circulation. In responding to writers' submissions—*Shenandoah* gets 15,000 submissions per year—Smith started enclosing notes suggesting that the submitters subscribe to the magazine. It produced significant results.

Most importantly, Smith wrote an impassioned defense of *Shenandoah's* value to the university in a memorandum to the administration. The paper detailed the magazine's various contributions to campus life and referred to the lavish praise that has been extended to the magazine by everyone from Billy Collins, former poet laureate of the United States, to former Washington and Lee President John Elrod.

"The ultimate value of a first-rate literary magazine is, unsurprisingly, similar to the value of the arts in general," Smith wrote. "While I would not begin to argue that *Shenandoah* is the sole source of spirit, of imagination, of hearth fire, and the sustaining symbol for the arts and humanities at Washington and Lee, I would suggest

***These days, the pursuit of arts and letters is often treated as an after-thought, the quaint realm of Mr. Chips.***

that it is...part of that indelible mystery and beauty that make Washington and Lee not merely an institution but an inspiration to all who know it."

Instead of huzzahs, the administration responded largely with silence. Informally, Smith heard encouraging words from some colleagues in the administration. But the magazine stayed on the chopping block as the campus-wide review proceeded. And in a recent interview, Provost H. Thomas Williams made it clear that the chopping block is where the magazine remains.

"The question is not resolved," Williams said. "*Shenandoah* is not like the English department, which would never be



**Washington and Lee Provost H. Thomas Williams hopes *Shenandoah* can be retained but at less cost to the university.**

considered expendable. *Shenandoah* is a more peripheral operation, and the issue is whether the resources would be more properly directed elsewhere."

Williams describes himself as a regular reader of the magazine and agrees that it has attracted widespread attention. "No doubt there's an important readership out there," he said. "One problem is that *Shenandoah* is well-known but its connection to the university is not well-known."

Asked if the magazine's demise is on the table, Williams replied, "Potentially, yes." But he added that the death of *Shenandoah* is not the goal he is working towards. Rather, he said, he would like an arrangement whereby the university's investment is much reduced and the magazine's contributions to the campus much increased.

Exactly how that will be accomplished, no one seems to know. Williams has asked the university's business school to form a team to analyze the magazine's business prospects and develop a plan. But as yet the team has not been assembled.

For David Lynn, the editor of the *Kenyon Review*, the drama surrounding *Shenandoah* is all too familiar. Ten years ago, Lynn found himself facing the same abyss.

"*Shenandoah* is like a replay of what happened to us," he said. "The Kenyon college trustees felt they were spending too much money on the review and not getting enough back. They were within a whisper of shutting us down."

"We had our defenders who said the college would be crazy to kill the review because it was part of the identity of the college and you couldn't buy that sort of benefit, and so forth. I have to tell you, that argument didn't do us a lot of good."

But another idea did plenty of good. Lynn put together a plan to convert the *Kenyon Review* to a non-profit organization with its own board of trustees and its own fundraising program. Instead of sucking from the teat of the college's endowment, Lynn proposed that his magazine build and use an endowment of its own.

Initially, the college administration was wary for obvious reasons. By allowing the review to become a fundraising entity, the college might be creating a competitor for

its own fundraising campaigns.

"One of my greatest victories was getting the college to understand that the review's fundraising would not be competitive with the college but complementary," Lynn said. "In other words, the total pie would get bigger because we would be going after fundamentally different groups of donors."

The plan succeeded, and the *Kenyon Review's* non-profit structure is now regarded as a model for others. To date the magazine has amassed an endowment of \$2 million, a modest amount by endowment standards but enough to provide the review with an income that frees it from the college's subsidy. Just this fall, the magazine held its annual ceremony for the *Kenyon Review* Award for Literary Achievement in New York and collected \$250,000 in corporate and other sponsorships.

"I believe this is the only realistic approach for a literary magazine," said Lynn. "As long as a magazine depends on a university, it will be vulnerable to the next president or provost who comes along. They will always have the power to kill you at will."

However successful the Lynn experiment, other universities have been slow to embrace the non-profit strategy for on-campus magazines. They fear, as did the Kenyon administration, that a second fundraising entity will sap the college's efforts, and thus far the *Kenyon Review* remains unique on American campuses.

Nonetheless, at Washington and Lee, Smith is working to make *Shenandoah* the second university-affiliated magazine to go non-profit. He has championed the idea with the administration, arguing that the magazine could eventually free itself of the need for a university subsidy.

As of yet he has made no progress, but, undeterred, Smith says he will keep trying. "*Shenandoah* has existed for 50 years and I am the inheritor of its tradition. I will not let it die on my watch," he said. "If anyone thinks different, they will find they have a badger on their hands." ♦

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

## OKLAHOMA

from page 1

the notion that higher education is not valued,” said Jerome Weber, professor of adult and higher education at the University of Oklahoma. “Economic opportunities have not been seen as being linked to higher education.”

Populism translated into anti-elitism,

**“Brain Gain 2010” envisions increasing the percentage of Oklahomans with college degrees by 40 percent.**

“an atmosphere not very conducive to a great appreciation of higher education,” said state Representative Bill Nations, a Democrat who sits on the higher education committee.

The advertising spots are the most visible element of a comprehensive drive to change that equation through a series of initiatives set in motion under former Chancellor Hans Brisch and aimed at increasing the percentage of Oklahomans with college degrees.

“We don’t have enough students in Oklahoma going to college, their retention rates are low, and we still need more college graduates in the state,” said Paul Risser, an Oklahoma native and former president of Oregon State University, who took over for Brisch two years ago and embraced the emphasis on boosting the state’s intellectual capital.

The centerpiece of the effort, named Brain Gain 2010, envisions increasing the percentage of Oklahomans with college degrees by 40 percent from 1996 to 2010.

While posters, videos and websites are attempting to change students’ attitudes about college, other programs address obstacles such as poor preparation, affordability and the need to help students succeed once they get to college:

- ACT’s Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS) helps teachers evaluate student learning in the eighth and tenth grades to guide



Paul Risser has expanded Oklahoma’s “Brain Gain” program since becoming chancellor at the state university system two years ago.

them in preparing for college.

- A need-based scholarship, the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP) enrolls low-income students as early as eighth grade and guarantees grants to those who successfully complete the course requirements and stay out of trouble.
- A performance funding scheme using the “Brain Gain” moniker rewards two- and four-year colleges for improving retention and graduation rates.
- Dozens of retention and graduation programs at the state’s two research institutions, 11 regional universities and 12 community colleges have emerged in response to state goals and incentives.

Risser has made some modifications to the programs he inherited. He adjusted Brain Gain formulas to reflect the diversity of institutions, for example. He also added \$800,000 in Brain Gain grants to support campus projects aimed at tackling obstacles to completion. And he is talking to industry leaders not simply about expanding employment opportunities, but about stressing the importance of a college background for existing jobs. “I’m happy with the suite of activities we have under way,” he said.

The programs also win rave reviews from national higher education leaders. “I think they’ve done really spectacular work,” said Paul Lingenfelter, executive director of the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association. “I frequently cite Oklahoma as a place that’s doing things right.”

But so far, college graduation levels have improved only modestly. In 1996, according to a report from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 20.1 percent of Oklahomans over 25 held bachelor’s degrees, lower than the national proportion, 23.6 percent. By 2000, Oklahoma had risen to 20.2 percent, and by 2003, college grads hit 21.9 percent of the state population. At the same time, however, national figures increased to 25 percent in 2000 and 26.5 percent in 2003. So despite its improvement, Oklahoma still faces a challenge moving out of the bottom quartile: Its ranking has actually fallen from 39th place among the 50 states in 1996 to 42nd place in 2003.

The original Brain Gain vision called for increasing the percentage of bachelor’s degree-holding Oklahomans to 28 percent by 2010, and doubling the percentage of those with associate’s degrees. Officials say they may not get there, but the trend is positive.

After years of investment that allowed the system to increase merit scholarships and endowed professorships during Brisch’s tenure, progress has been stalled by a state budget shortfall that led to a two-year 11 percent decline in appropriations for the Oklahoma State Regents, who have constitutional authority over all of the state’s public institutions as well as the state’s scholarship program. Tuition rose by

an average of 34 percent during the last three years, as legislators relaxed scrutiny over percentage increases in favor of a general guideline not to surpass the average of peer institutions.

“We’ve raised tuition more than most of us have felt comfortable with,” said Larry Williams, president of Northeastern State University, where tuition and fees have gone from \$2,116 a year for 15 units to \$3,000 in the last three years.

But, unlike their counterparts in many states, Oklahoma’s legislators actually increased funding for the state’s innovative

need-based scholarship even while decreasing higher education appropriations. In three years, OHLAP funding increased five-fold from \$2.9 million to \$15.1 million even as higher education’s share fell from \$860 million to \$802 million.

OHLAP was created in 1992 for students from families earning \$24,000 or less. The threshold was increased to \$32,000 in 1999, and to \$50,000 in 2000. Students enroll in the eighth, ninth or tenth grade by pledging to pursue a 17-unit course pattern. They must maintain a 2.5 grade point average in those courses, attend school regularly, and stay out of disciplinary trouble. The scholarship is pegged to tuition at public institutions, but also can be used at any of the state’s 12 private institutions.

A public awareness campaign funded by a 1999 federal GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) grant helped get the message out through posters and other means. Until then, said Dolores Mize, “Schools weren’t pushing it. It really took hold when we got our GEAR UP money.”

Because of the academic requirements, OHLAP functions as a preparation program as well as a financial aid program. OHLAP recipients outperform other students in the state—with average ACT scores of 21, compared to 20.6 for other students, and average grades of 3.5, compared to 3.0 for non-OHLAP students.

But the increased awareness and the higher income thresholds mean that the size and the cost of the program have mushroomed. The first class of OHLAP recipients, who started college in 1998, numbered just 619 and cost less than \$1 million. But in 2008, OHLAP students enrolled in college are expected to number 17,767 and cost the state \$47 million.

Already, this year’s projection of \$19 million for OHLAP exceeds the budgeted \$15.1 million. While a gaming bill supported by voters last November could yield the additional \$4 million, officials are still looking for a dedicated revenue source for the future. Risser, for one, is confident about finding one: “I have not talked to a single legislator who has made a wavering statement on OHLAP,” he said.



Joseph Cappy, vice chairman of the Oklahoma State Regents, has insisted that campuses improve their performance to receive higher appropriations.

shortfall is the sort of problem he welcomes. “We hope that we’re going to have trouble financing the number of scholarships that are requested,” he said. “It means we’ve got the kids wanting to go to college.”

EPAS is also a source of optimism. The program began in 1993 through a collaboration between former Chancellor Brisch and ACT, Inc. The state regents pay for schools to use pre-ACT tests called Plan and Explore to assess students in the eighth and tenth grades.

School districts participate on a voluntary basis. By last year more than 500 of the state’s 540 school districts were using EPAS to assess more than 80,000 students. According to the Southern Regional Education Board, Oklahoma’s average ACT score increased from 20 in 1992 to 20.5 ten years later, even though more students were taking the test. Officials also credit EPAS for a rise in test scores among Oklahoma minority students, who outscore their national peers.

Officials believe the program, which has cost the state regents less than \$1 million, more than pays for itself. From 1996 to 2002, the percentage of first-time fresh-

**This year’s projection of \$19 million for the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program, a need-based scholarship, exceeds the budgeted \$15.1 million.**

men enrolled in remedial courses at state institutions decreased from 40.3 percent to 38.4 percent even though the regents expanded core entrance requirements from 11 to 15 courses in 1995. If ACT estimates of \$6 in savings for every dollar spent on EPAS are correct, the state is saving more than \$4 million a year in remediation costs.

“We take preparation for college very seriously,” said Mize. “We’ve had excellent higher education leadership who real-

ize...that, other things being equal, it's the rigor of preparation before college that is the best predictor of success. If you're going to put your effort somewhere, put it in the place it is most likely to be successful, and catch people before it's too late."

Counselors value EPAS because the assessment reports help them guide individual students. "It's one of the best things the regents do for the state of Oklahoma," said Ann Burcham, learning director at Tulsa School of Science and Technology, a public high school. "It's a dynamic counseling tool."

Located on Tulsa's north side, TSST's students are overwhelmingly low-income minorities—80 percent receive free or reduced-price lunches, and 89 percent are African American. Most have parents who did not attend college. In addition to EPAS, Burcham says the school's partnership with the state's GEAR UP program has attracted more students to the college path.

Seniors Almetry Bailey, Tiffany Shorter, Dennique Williams and Shana Meek have participated in the program since the eighth grade, visiting college campuses and working with tutors and mentors from the institutions. Bailey says she wants to teach elementary school. Shorter is considering a career in communications or law. Williams dreams of becoming an anesthesiologist, and Meek plans to practice law. None of the students seems to question whether she will go to college.

So far, Burcham said, it looks like more than 30 percent of the class will enroll in college in the fall, compared with about 20 percent of last year's graduates. But paying for college is another story. Though all four students would qualify for an OHLAP grant, only Shana will receive one. The others didn't apply because their parents were reluctant to submit their tax forms despite encouragement from school officials.

Along with the usual hurdles to completing a B.A., students in Tulsa face an additional one: Historically there has been no public four-year campus in metropolitan Tulsa. So students had to leave the area or attend Tulsa Community College (TCC) and then transfer to one of the four institutions—Oklahoma State University (OSU), the University of Oklahoma (OU), Langston University or Northeastern State University (NSU)—that offered upper division courses through a consortium.

Recently, officials have concentrated those offerings in OSU-Tulsa and Langston, with OU focusing on the health sciences. Four years ago, NSU opened a four-year campus in Broken Arrow, 15 miles away, with lower division classes run by TCC. And Rogers State University, 30 miles away in Claremore, is transitioning from a two-year to a four-year campus.

Campus by campus, the plan is to contribute to Brain Gain. Since its origins as a vision for increasing the number of college graduates, the state regents have added teeth, transforming Brain Gain into a performance funding formula. "This whole thing was built on quicksand," said Regents Vice Chairman Joseph Cappy. "We decided to look at things that you

could measure. We agreed on paying for improvement."

So far Brain Gain dollars have not approached the regents' target of two percent. The Regents began with \$2 million in Brain Gain funds out of an \$860 million budget in 2001-02, increased the number to \$2.54 million out of \$851 million the next year, but retrenched to \$2.2 million the following year when appropriations fell to \$768 million. This year, with the overall budget back up to \$802 million, Brain Gain funding has hit \$3 million, but \$800,000 is dedicated to grants for promising campus retention programs. The regents hope to double the total to \$6 million for next year, said Cappy.

But even at low levels, the funding formula has caused consternation among institutions. "Many of the presidents thought it was a wild idea that would phase itself out," said Cappy, a staunch proponent of performance funding. "Once they saw it wasn't going to go away, they wanted to fine tune the formula. We have not fought those changes. We just want to improve the number of young people going to college and graduating."

Because the formula is used to funnel Brain Gain dollars to schools that have shown the most improvement, it needs to address each institution's unique circumstances, said Joe Wiley, president of Rogers State University. Wiley, who chairs a presidents' committee focused on Brain Gain, cites the example of Cameron University, in Lawton, which regularly enrolls active duty U.S. Army personnel or their family members, from nearby Fort Sill,

**Oklahoma still has a challenge moving out of the bottom quartile: Its ranking has actually fallen from 39th place in 1996 to 42nd place in 2003.**

who sometimes have to transfer on short notice.

Working with Risser, the Brain Gain committee determined that those kinds of circumstances can best be addressed by allowing institutions to choose some of the benchmarks used to evaluate them. While first-year retention, six-year graduation rate, and number of degrees granted figure in the formula for each school, institutions can add other factors, such as improving retention of Hispanic students or part-timers.

So far, all campuses have received some of the funds each year, but how they go about improving retention and graduation rates varies by campus. At the University of Oklahoma's main campus in Norman, for example, six-year graduation rates rose from 53.3 percent in 1998 to 59 percent in 2002 under the leadership of President David Boren, a former U.S. senator.

In addition to the advertising campaign, actions taken at OU range from enhanced services for students facing acade-

mic or financial difficulties to providing mid-term grade reports earlier in the semester and strengthening class identity by labeling classes according to their anticipated graduation year. But the higher graduation rates aren't easily attributable to those changes. "By far, the preeminent reason they've gone up is that we've tightened our admissions standards," said Nick Hathaway, OU's vice president for university and administrative affairs. "The rest has probably helped on the margins."

Admissions standards at the state's flagship institution once were more aligned with a populist tradition than some of its Big Twelve competitors, but gradually they have been ratcheted up, despite opposition from some football boosters. Today, in-state students must either score a 24 on the ACT or have a 3.0 grade point average and rank in the top 25 percent of their high school classes. For non-residents the requirements are higher.

OU's success underscores the difficulties for other institutions. Forty-eight miles away at Redlands Community College, in El Reno, such strategies are not an option. "I accept, understand and support the statement that Oklahoma needs more college graduates," said President Larry Devane. "I'm also a champion for people having a chance, and that's not going to produce as many graduates as being selective will. I'm willing to take a hit. The two-year school is at a disadvantage versus selective institutions that take National Merit Scholars and graduates with a B average. We're an open-access institution."

Cognizant that community colleges serve many students who are not degree-bound, Devane said he is continuing to focus on measuring student learning and student satisfaction—which feed into persistence—rather than obsessing about graduation rates. But, like OU, Redlands Community College met all of its targets in the last Brain Gain allocation.

Rose State College, however, fell short, earning only 45 of 100 possible credits, because of low graduation and retention rates, the very areas officials hope their ad campaign will help address.

At Northeastern State, after observing a seven-year slide that brought enrollment down to 8,100 in 1999, President Williams ordered a wholesale reorganization of admissions, financial aid, and advising offices. Within a year, the one-year retention rate had jumped from 59 to 69 percent, and it remains in the high sixties. New enrollments also jumped—from 905 in 1999 to 1,258 in 2004. "You have no idea how many things we changed," said Bill Nowlin, who assumed the role of dean for enrollment management. "We did some serious soul-searching. We went back to the mentality of [asking] what we can do to make students want to come here."



**Admission standards have been tightened at the University of Oklahoma, despite opposition from boosters of the university's nationally ranked football team.**

Located in Tahlequah, home to the Cherokee Nation, NSU serves a large proportion of Native Americans, many of whom are low-income, first-generation college students. To better assist them, the school added a college strategies session for first-year students, and upgraded their tutoring, career development, placement and assessment services.

Now, to bring graduation rates up from 36 percent to the Brain Gain target of 40 percent, officials are turning their focus to the many students NSU loses in their second year. A new program, Spotlight on Sophomore Year Experience Success, or SOS-YES, will focus on helping students through the "sophomore slump." For that initiative, NSU has received a Brain Gain grant of \$75,000, and Nowlin is seeking additional support from the federal Fund for the Improvement of Secondary Education.

Oklahoma State University has also been successful in applying for Brain Gain initiative funds. OSU's grant of \$90,000 will support the school's new Transfer Student Resource Center. According to Jim Hull, a senior academic counselor with University Academic Services, 40 percent of OSU's undergraduates transfer from other institutions, and many face "transfer shock" upon arriving at the large research campus. Improving the graduation rate of transfer students is one of OSU's Brain Gain measures.

Another means of addressing transfer obstacles is the campus' new partnership with Northern Oklahoma College, a two-year school. The Gateway program, housed across the street from OSU's main campus in Stillwater, allows students who can't meet OSU's entrance requirements to take their first 24 units of coursework in the small class settings of Gateway, while receiving provisional admission to OSU and participating in OSU campus activities.

"This is a group of students we suspect are lacking in certain services," said Hull. "We're trying to develop a sense of place, a sense of belonging. We want them to succeed." ♦

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

# OTHER VOICES



## Corporate Welfare in Disguise

### The student loan industry is raking in the profits

By Robert Shireman

**F**ACED WITH UNPRECEDENTED budget shortfalls, states across the nation are desperate for money to support affordable higher education. Searching for every scrap and morsel, 23 states have managed to leverage their small role in the federal guaranteed student loan program into a little extra cash, totaling a few hundred million dollars. Understandably, they appreciate the income. The agency heads and their lobbyists regularly travel to Washington to argue for the preservation of their roles in the system. Sometimes they are able to enlist their state's governor in the effort.

But states could get even more money out of the federal student loan system. Billions more. How? By eliminating the state role, streamlining the loan program, and passing along the federal budget savings to all states. To get there, governors will need to rise above the empire-building tendencies of their own agency chiefs, and make the case to congress that a reformed, market-based system is in the best interests of students and families.

Reform would be worth the leadership effort and the political maneuvering it would require from governors. Based on President Bush's 2005 budget figures, waste and inefficiency in the federal loan system cost \$7.54 billion in this year alone. If, through student loan reforms, these funds were provided to states for need-based financial aid instead, states could more than double total state financial aid (based on the total in 2002-03, the most recent data available). Instead of some states netting a few hundred million dollars, students in all the states would benefit and the states would not have to be in the business of administering student loans.

A sample distribution would yield the annual assistance shown below (based on Pell Grant recipients in each state):

Alabama—\$149,106,687	Montana \$32,435,809
Alaska—\$8,824,643	Nebraska \$43,116,485
Arizona—\$123,807,248	Nevada \$28,051,713
Arkansas \$90,759,793	New Hampshire—\$16,900,652
California—\$896,268,564	New Jersey—\$174,682,859
Colorado—\$91,689,973	New Mexico—\$65,132,275
Connecticut—\$46,898,044	New York—\$622,446,265
Delaware—\$12,601,300	North Carolina—\$201,321,916
District of Columbia—\$12,567,455	North Dakota—\$22,343,744
Florida—\$437,311,014	Ohio—\$264,191,182
Georgia—\$191,782,689	Oklahoma—\$112,562,338
Hawaii—\$23,746,078	Oregon—\$90,294,227
Idaho—\$47,377,824	Pennsylvania—\$252,976,341
Illinois—\$275,232,087	Puerto Rico—\$378,742,713
Indiana—\$134,741,270	Rhode Island—\$18,078,614
Iowa—\$80,200,821	South Carolina—\$114,676,647
Kansas—\$67,898,161	South Dakota—\$23,899,066
Kentucky—\$116,376,622	Tennessee—\$134,866,607
Louisiana—\$154,444,624	Texas—\$592,169,562
Maine—\$30,623,745	Utah—\$76,377,554
Maryland—\$101,796,399	Vermont—\$12,386,641
Massachusetts—\$102,819,959	Virginia—\$136,596,476
Michigan—\$223,177,829	Washington—\$130,484,892
Minnesota—\$106,090,292	West Virginia—\$53,982,919
Mississippi—\$128,888,380	Wisconsin—\$98,292,010
Missouri—\$131,117,277	Wyoming—\$12,185,149

These amounts are far larger than those earned by any state from its current “guarantor” role. California's agency, for example, hopes to earn maybe \$30 million next year. But reform of the whole system could free up 30 times as much for California students—more than the state spends now on Cal Grants (\$759 million in the 2004-05 budget), one of the best financial aid programs in the country.

#### The current state role

The federal government has two key responsibilities associated with guaranteed student loans. It has to pay the lender when the borrower defaults; that's what the guarantee means. But before making that payment, the government has to ensure that the lender actually made a reasonably diligent effort to collect on the loan. After all, when a loan is 98-100 percent guaranteed, there is little financial incentive to spend very much on collection.

*In the student loan industry, we the taxpayers take the risk, while the student loan companies take home the profits.*

When the federal guarantee system was created forty years ago, the idea was that state agencies and some nonprofit organizations would serve as co-guarantors, shouldering a portion of the default costs, and taking on the frontline responsibility for policing the guarantee. Risk-sharing soon failed, however, when not enough states and charities were willing to take on the risk. That should have taken the states out of the equation. Instead, congress just kept sweetening the deal.

Eventually, the federal government assumed 100 percent of the program costs (actually, more than 100 percent), and called on a network of state agencies (and a few specially designated nonprofit organizations such as USA Funds and the National Student Loan Program) to serve, essentially, as extensions of the federal government.

It's like a roommate who you thought was going to split the rent, but who now gets paid for living with you. Instead of reducing the federal costs as originally intended, state guarantee agencies turned out to add yet another layer of subsidy and complexity to the system. Making a tidy little profit off their role, they are reluctant to give it up.

Although its explanation makes for a potentially mind-numbing paragraph, the actual fee structure works like this: When a state guarantee agency puts its imprimatur on a federal student loan, the agency receives a .4 percent “loan processing and issuance fee,” and an annual .1 percent “account maintenance fee,” paid by the federal government. If a borrower's payments are late, the bank notifies the guarantee agency, which has an opportunity to encourage the borrower to make a payment. If successful, the agency receives a one percent “default aversion fee” from the Department of Education. If the borrower defaults, the agency reimburses the bank that originally issued the student a loan. If the agency succeeds in collecting payments on the defaulted loan, it gets to keep 28 percent. If the loan remains in default, the feds directly reimburse the agency 98 percent of what the agency paid the bank, with the remainder coming from the “federal reserve fund” controlled by the agency. If the agency doesn't have enough federal reserves, the feds cover the shortfall so that the banks get paid. The agency can also charge students a one percent “guarantee fee” in order to bolster its federal reserves, but since the Department of Education would cover any shortfall anyway, agencies often waive the fee.

Believe it or not, all of these excruciating details are in federal law, written by congress with the help of lobbyists. There is no real logic to the system. But 23 state agencies and a dozen free-floating nonprofit organizations think it's just nifty.

#### The rest of the program

If states and a few charities were the only ones profiting from the federal loan program, it would not be worth complaining about. It would be a transfer of public funds from one level of government to the other. But states actually receive only a small portion of the federal subsidy pie. The bulk of the inefficiency—an estimated \$7.54 billion in 2005 alone, according to figures from President Bush's budget—is going to Sallie Mae and other lenders, who take virtually no risk (because of the federal backing) but rake in enormous profits.

Federal student loans had originally been provided directly, like other college aid, following a recommendation of the economist Milton Friedman in the 1950s. But when congress in 1965 wanted to expand on that start, irrational budget rules of the time got in the way: A guaranteed loan appeared to cost nothing, even though default payments and interest subsidies would be paid in the future. And a direct loan showed up in the budget as a total loss in the year it was made, even though most of it would be paid back with interest.

The budgetary treatment “distorted costs and did not recognize the economic reality of the transactions,” according to the Government Accountability Office. Today, the federal government assesses the costs of loan programs comprehensively, producing “transparency regarding the government's total estimated subsidy costs,” according to the GAO.

What do the comprehensive budget estimates show? The guarantee system, as it is

*Governors will need to make the case to congress that a reformed, market-based system is in the best interests of students and families.*

currently designed, is massively inefficient compared to a direct loan program that began as a pilot in 1992, the brainchild of some of the economists in the first Bush Administration. But since no one makes a huge profit in the direct system, there is not a high-powered lobbying organization pushing to retire the outdated, poorly structured guarantee system.

All of the federal budget and accounting agencies have reached this same conclusion. For example, President Bush's Office of Management and Budget says the guarantee system has "unnecessary subsidies," and that the direct loan program's significantly lower costs "call into question the cost effectiveness of the (guarantee) program structure."

After studying the guaranteed loan program, Congressman Tom Petri (a Republican from Wisconsin) found that despite the initial impression that it represents a private-sector approach, it is in fact so flawed that "no fiscal conservative or free-market supporter could justify embracing it." Along with several Republican and Democratic colleagues, he introduced legislation to allow colleges that choose to participate in the direct loan program to share in the federal budget savings. The Congressional Budget Office analysis of the bill found that, with only a modest increase in the size of the direct loan program, \$12.3 billion would be shifted from banks to students.

**Student loan reform would bring a system that involves far fewer government employees, greater use of market forces, and leaves more money for state financial aid programs.**

#### Defenders of the status quo

Despite the clear and unanimous pronouncements from the accountants, we are still stuck with the guarantee system that was produced under the distorted, irrational budget rules of 1965.

Protected from risk by U.S. taxpayers, Sallie Mae and other lenders are raking in profits. Originally created by congress 30 years ago, Sallie Mae's profits tripled between 2001 and 2003. In last year's Fortune 500, Sallie Mae ranked fourth by one measure of profitability, and 12th by the other

measure. The company CEO, Albert Lord, pocketed a reported \$41.8 million in compensation, according to the *Washington Post*.

High profits and large compensation packages are not inherently evil. Indeed, they are important rewards and signals in a free market system that relies on risk-taking to encourage innovation and entrepreneurialism. But the student loan industry is hardly a shining example of the free market at work. Indeed, it is not even close. In this industry, we the taxpayers take the risk, while the student loan companies take home the profits. The program is corporate welfare in disguise.

Some of the profits, of course, finance expensive and creative lobbying strategies. Terrified of the budget reports showing the massive waste, the student loan industry has borrowed a page from the tobacco industry's long-successful effort to paint the research on smoking as questionable. When the subject is loans, interest projections, and discount rates, it is not hard to convince the average numbers-shy Capitol Hill staffer that this is all open to interpretation. And given where the campaign money is coming from, it is a convenient position for a member of congress to take.

The state guarantee agencies essentially serve to provide members of congress with one more reason to go along with the distortions proffered by Sallie Mae and the banks. Local bankers visit to say that the guaranteed loan program is good. The college financial aid officer, on a visit to Washington subsidized by the bank, praises the bank's role in the system. And to top it off, they bring a letter from the governor, who expresses an appreciation for the funds raised through the state guarantee agency. Arguing with all those home-state lobbyists would take up a lot of time and effort. It's easier just to go along.

This ridiculous system will not endure for long, though, for the same reason that it has managed to survive: money. The federal deficit is quickly becoming the focus of Democrats on Capitol Hill, as well as the focus of conservative think tanks and citizen groups. They are on the prowl for waste and inefficiency, and the idiotic structure of the student loan program is impossible to miss.

At the same time, congress is undertaking a review of the federal Higher Education Act which includes the loan programs. The only way that they can invest in financial aid is to find a way to cut back. The loan program's inefficiencies are the perfect target. If those who want to invest in student aid do not capture the savings that would come from reform, then the deficit hawks will go after it.

Governors could lead the way toward cutting the waste in favor of financial aid. They can rise above the parochial interests of their own agencies and make the case that student loan reform would bring a system that involves far fewer government employees, greater use of market forces, and leaves more money for states to develop and expand financial aid programs that serve the low-income families in their own states.

It is hard to argue with the idea of doubling state financial aid without adding one dime to the deficit. ♦

*Robert Shireman is a visiting scholar at the UC Berkeley Center for Studies in Higher Education, and founder of the website StudentLoanWatch.org.*



## Stanford of the Northwest

### Could Bill Gates University become the symbol of a new Gilded Age?

By David L. Kirp

**I**N 1885, Leland Stanford Jr., railroad tycoon and California politician, was considering whether to create a new university. Stanford had given some thought to starting a technical school instead—he wanted his new institution to be avowedly practical—and, together with his wife, Jane, he sought advice from Harvard's president, Abbott Lawrence Lowell.

Not surprisingly, Lowell favored the university option. How large an endowment would be needed, Jane asked, to do the job right? Not less than \$5 million, Lowell replied. There was a short silence, and then Leland spoke up. "Well, Jane," he said, "we could manage that, couldn't we?"

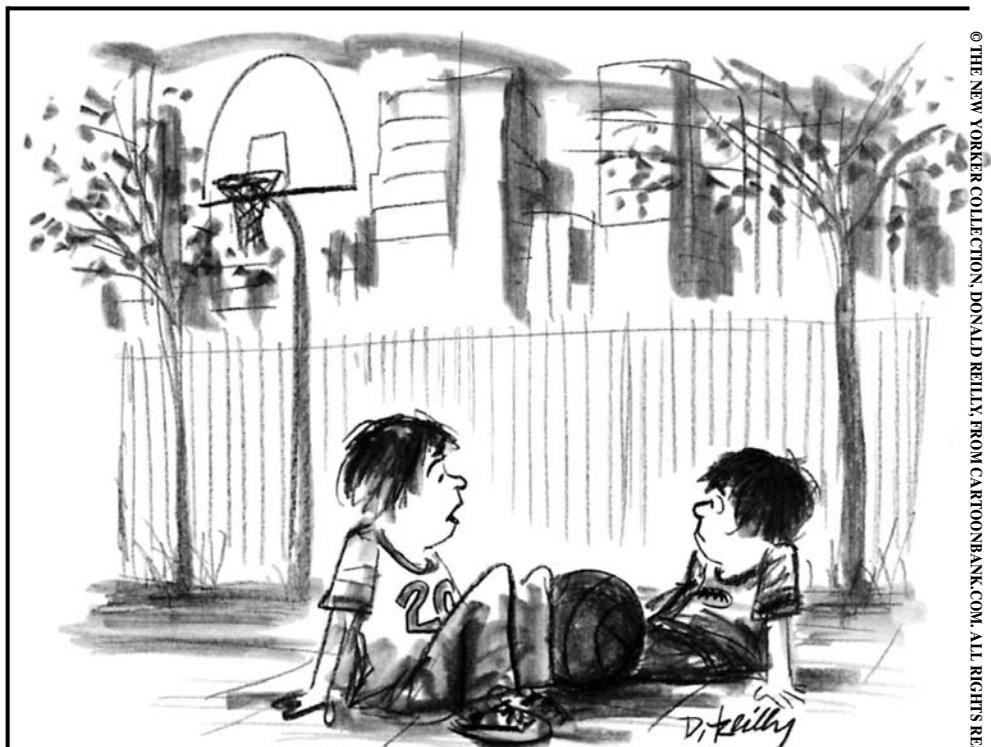
Stanford wasn't the only industrialist with such a dream. This was the Gilded Age, a time when the market ruled. By the turn of the century, John D. Rockefeller and his friends had chipped in with \$10 million to start the University of Chicago, and Andrew Carnegie had launched Carnegie Technical Schools, renamed Carnegie Mellon University in 1967.

Fast forward to 2005 and imagine the following scenario. Bill Gates, Harvard's most famous dropout—and, with more than \$40 billion, the richest man in the world—decides that, like Leland Stanford, he wants "to qualify students for personal success and direct usefulness in life."

Could Gates bring it off? Could Bill Gates University become the Stanford of the northwest? Conventional wisdom says no: Institutional newcomers do not have a chance in the rarified world of premiere American universities. Indeed, the only successful new schools in recent decades are the for-profit institutions like the University of Phoenix, and they aren't in the same league. But profound changes in how universities develop and maintain their reputations—the fact that, simply put, money talks so powerfully—prompt me to think that Gates would have a decent shot at cracking the inner circle.

History cautions against this argument. Since Leland Stanford's day, once a university has acquired its place in the pecking order it almost always has stayed there. Compare a hypothetical "Fortune 500" list of the top companies in 1900 with a similar ranking of uni-

*continued next page*



"They're making me go to humanities camp."

**from preceding page**

versities from that year. While relatively few of these businesses still exist, the ranking of universities has changed remarkably little. In 1900, Harvard, Columbia, Yale, Cornell, Princeton, Johns Hopkins, Berkeley, Pennsylvania, Michigan—and the two newcomers, Chicago and Stanford—formed the Association of American Universities, the self-selected organization of top research universities.

A handful of schools like Clark University, a founding member of the AAU, have fallen from grace, and others have slipped a few notches. There have been some additions to the upper ranks, mainly science-driven schools like Caltech and MIT, and state universities in the midwest and west coast. But the stability is what's noteworthy. If you didn't know better, you would suspect it was a cartel.

How has this situation come to pass? An enormous investment would be needed to start a university with hopes of greatness. In 1885, \$5 million—about \$92 million in today's dollars—could buy Leland Stanford a first-class university. Not so these days. In 2002, forty-six institutions had endowments larger than \$1 billion, and Harvard's endowment is approaching \$20 billion.

Big science costs buckets of money. So does keeping up with the institutional Joneses—what economist Gordon Winston calls positional warfare—with Jacuzzis in the dorm rooms, rock-climbing walls in the gym, and sushi bars in the dining hall. Endowment is directly correlated with prestige, as Winston has shown: Top-ranked schools invariably subsidize their students more than those lower in the pecking order.

It is also true that higher education is a most peculiar market. The “sellers,” the universities, seek out the most attractive “buyers”—that is, students and professors. Nabisco doesn't care much about who eats its cookies, but as Robert Frank notes, “the university's consumers are one of the most important inputs in its production process, and this is not the case for producers of typical private goods and services. [Elite institutions] need top students every bit as much as top students need them.”

The chief draw for top students, a survey at elite institutions shows, is not the quality of education, something that's notoriously hard to decipher. Rather, it is prestige—more precisely, its place in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. Those rankings inform prospective undergraduates that others just like them will also be enrolling. That assures them of similarly motivated classmates, and increases the chances that they can make the kinds of connections that build careers. Even as college administrators complain about the formula that *U.S. News* uses, they are working assiduously to improve their position. This means, in essence, being a well-heeled institution with a highly selective group of students.

Among research universities, star professors figure especially heavily in the calculus of prestige. That's why schools seek to maintain their position by outbidding one another, offering the big academic names bigger salaries and lighter teaching loads, as well as top-flight colleagues with whom they can work, and good students who can make them look smarter.

What potentially gives Bill Gates—or Warren Buffet or the Walton (Wal-Mart) family—an opening is the fact that, during the past quarter of a century, American higher education has been transformed by the power as well as the ethic of the marketplace. Entrepreneurial ambition, once regarded in academe as a necessary evil, has become a virtue. In Britain, where in the “*Brideshead Revisited*” world privilege counted for everything, the great modern success story has been the resolutely democratic Open University. That school opened in 1970 and, as its name suggests, it is open to all comers.

Now Open University enrolls 180,000 undergraduates in Britain alone, many more in Europe and Asia. The government's Quality Assurance Agency ranks it among the top thirty British universities in research, and among the top ten in teaching; in engineering instruction it outperforms Oxford and Cambridge. By contrast, in America the great success story of modern times is New York University, whose achievements reveal the profound potential impact of money on institutional reputation.

In 1975, NYU was literally teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. Then it recruited John Brademas, a longtime congressman and able fundraiser, as its president, and its situation started to improve. Millions of dollars were lavished on superstars, many of whom were given their own research centers. The arrival of each new faculty recruit created what economists call a signaling effect, letting more timid souls know that it was safe to jump from Chicago or Princeton to Washington Square.

In determining its priorities, NYU opted not to break the bank with investments in Big Science, focusing instead on some of the professional schools and liberal arts departments. The most dramatic transformation came in philosophy. Philosophers are relatively cheap; all they need, the old joke goes, is a ream of paper, lots of sharpened pencils, and a wastepaper basket for their false starts. NYU was able to recruit established professors from schools like MIT and Oxford, bringing together people who welcomed the chance to work together. In 1995, the university lacked an accredited Ph.D. program in philosophy; five years later, it was ranked number one.

**Conventional wisdom says that newcomers do not have a chance in the rarified world of premiere American universities.**

**An enormous investment would be needed to start a university with hopes of greatness. In 2002, forty-six institutions had endowments larger than \$1 billion.**

Traditionally NYU was a commuters' school, but millions of dollars were spent to create a vibrant campus. As word of these developments spread, students from across the country with stronger academic records started showing up, and that change registered on the *U.S. News* rankings. The school was also able to exploit its connections to attract heads of state, including Bill Clinton, Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac, to a widely publicized conference at NYU's overseas center in Florence; that coup gave credibility to the university's boast that it was a leading player in higher education across the globe.

Could Bill Gates duplicate NYU's feat? Gates starts out with the great advantage of instant and generally positive name recognition. (Whether students a century ago were eager to enroll in “Robber Baron U” is unknown.) He does not have New York City going for him, as NYU does, but NYU made its first move before the “I Love New York” days, when the city was not such a draw. Besides, Bill Gates' home town of Seattle is far more appealing than New Haven, home to the nation's second most prestigious school.

Doubtlessly, Gates would emphasize science, and that costs a lot of money. Yet at least in high tech he has an enormous leg up, and his university would give new meaning to industry-university collaboration. Gates U could also buy talented students with generous scholarships based not on the traditional criterion of need, but rather on merit; that's what schools such as Washington University are increasingly doing.

If Gates were to convert half of his fortune into an endowment for this new institution, he would instantly match Harvard's resources, but there is no need for such a dramatic gesture. Endowments at top-flight schools such as Brown, Vanderbilt and Johns Hopkins are less than a tenth as big as Harvard's. About such a sum, Bill Gates could say to his wife, Melinda, just what Leland Stanford said to Jane: “We could manage that.” Moreover, with Gates as the lead donor, others would contribute, for there are always dormitories, libraries and professors' chairs to be named.

The NYU story contains another lesson: Raising endowment may not be crucial to institutional success, at least in the short term. Why should a school spend just five percent of the money that it raises—the typical payout from endowment—when it can spend it as fast as it takes it in? NYU, impatient for status, opted for this “spend it now” approach. NYU's endowment barely topped \$1 billion in 2002. That is just a quarter the size of Emory University's endowment and smaller than Williams College's.

Even if Bill Gates U or something like it eventually opens, the longstanding dominance of a school like Harvard or Yale would not be threatened. In many ways, including the ineffable cachet, they have too much going for them. But a place like NYU—or even Chicago or Stanford, where similar ventures began in an earlier Gilded Age—would be closely monitoring these developments.

The fact a new university could join the ranks of the elite in the course of a single generation is another example of how, for good as well as bad, the market has come to dominate higher education. ♦

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“You're kidding! You count S.A.T.s?”

## GEORGIA

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rollment at southern universities with which it likes to compare itself academically, notably the flagship universities of North Carolina and Virginia.

More troubling, UGA's enrollment of black freshmen this year dropped 26 percent from the fall of 2003, although black enrollment also declined at several flagship universities outside the South, including Michigan, Ohio State, UC Berkeley and the University of Illinois.

The focus by the media on freshman class enrollment numbers grates on UGA officials, who point out that there are more

***UGA is considering a new race-conscious admissions policy, and critics of affirmative action are threatening a new round of lawsuits.***

than 1,800 blacks among the 25,000 undergraduates and 8,000 graduate students on campus, that UGA is an increasingly diverse school that excels in retaining black students once they're enrolled—95 percent of black freshmen return for their sophomore year—and that UGA is one of the leading schools in the country in awarding doctoral degrees to blacks.

Still, UGA's situation is noteworthy because the issue of diversity has whipsawed the institution ever since two African Americans, Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes, made history in 1961 by integrating the school amid protests and a riot. While UGA spent much of the '60s defending segregation, it spent much of the past decade defending an affirmative action program that ultimately was struck down. Now the university is considering a new race-conscious admissions policy, and critics of affirmative action are threatening a new round of lawsuits.

It's a story that illustrates the challenges of recruiting and maintaining the kind of "critical mass" of black students that provides them a comfort level. In UGA's case, a legally charged atmosphere has been made more difficult by a history and legacy that recalls the days when blacks were not welcome.

The numbers may not tell the whole story, but they are hard to ignore. While black enrollment averages 23 percent at Georgia's 34 state colleges and universities, it still lags below six percent at UGA. This, despite a commitment in 2002 to raise that level to eight percent in the next three years.

In fact, since 2000, UGA has enrolled more Asian students than African Americans in a state where the black population is 14 times that of Asians. This year's 26 percent decline in black freshman enrollment was not the worst showing, either. In 2001, the year the courts struck down UGA's admissions policy, enrollment of black freshmen declined 38 percent.

And the "yield rate"—the number of students who enroll after being accepted—continues to run eight to ten percentage points lower for blacks than for whites.

Defenders and critics of the university alike are quick to cite the history that still shapes UGA's image among parents of college-bound students in Georgia, especially parents of African Americans.

"Georgia has a legacy to overcome," said Frank Matthews, publisher of the magazine *Black Issues in Higher Education*. "It just never has been perceived as a warm, inviting place for black people. They have to admit that, and they have to work doubly hard if they want to overcome it. And if they don't want to overcome it, they'll just get left behind because, in the final analysis, all great universities have very strong diversity profiles."

"We're still blessed with some history we've got to overcome," conceded UGA Director of Admissions Nancy McDuff. "And certainly there is a sense of that for the parents of many current college students, who did not have a positive experience at the University of Georgia."

Echoed Keith Parker, UGA's associate provost for institutional diversity: "First of all, we must let individuals know the history and that we have graduated from 1960. And as a result, we think we're in a position to always acknowledge the past, but we're not living in the past. We're looking forward."

Not all students—let alone their parents—would agree that UGA is not living in the past. Chantal Stepney, a black senior from Atlanta, recently wrote in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* that when she is asked back home if UGA is as bad as it was during the days of Hunter and Holmes, she tells them no, but adds:

"I don't have police officers escorting me across campus, or rocks being thrown at me while people stand and cheer. But I do let them know that UGA is still a place where the old Confederate flag flies high, where people are still afraid to talk about race-related issues and few professors and students look like they do. I tell them that sometimes, it is rather difficult being a minority here."

It's also difficult for a university to look forward when it is bogged down in a legal morass. UGA faced 15 lawsuits in six years challenging the race-conscious admissions policy that was rejected in 2001. Much like a policy at the University of Michigan that the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional in 2003, UGA applied a "Total Student Index" to about ten percent of its undergraduate applicants that gave a small numerical bonus to minority students.

But the high court's parallel ruling in the Michigan case that diversity could be considered as part of an overall admissions plan has given UGA hope that a new policy that pays tribute to the benefits of diversity will pass legal muster.

Whatever the legal hoops, the personal experiences of Aubrey Johnson and Tameisha Moore should be both worrisome and encouraging to UGA officials. That both were prime candidates for UGA but never crossed its radar screen suggests a lack of sophistication and aggressiveness in recruiting that elite private colleges and

many top public universities mastered years ago. That both students ignored the legacy of UGA, applied on their own, and have embraced both the campus and this college town suggests that UGA has the potential to become a choice destination for blacks.

Johnson, who at the time wanted to become a veterinarian (she has since decided to pursue a double major in psychology and sociology), thought it was strange that so many other schools were interested in her but UGA apparently was not. "It kind of hurt me. Because I felt like, I'm a minority and I want to go into a field—veterinary medicine—where there's not a lot of women and there's not a lot of blacks, and UGA should be looking at me," she said. "But they never recruited me. They never came after me."

She applied anyway, having already decided that if she were not accepted she would go to the University of Tennessee, or Auburn or Clark Atlanta University (a historically black college). "Then I'd transfer over, because I wanted my degree to say University of Georgia."

Her visit to UGA for orientation in July 2002 was "the first time I'd ever set foot on this campus," she said. "But I knew this was where I wanted to go... When I got to orientation, I was like, 'Oh my God, this is like North Gwinnett; there's no black people here.' But it didn't really upset me, because I know so many intelligent black people, and there should be more here. And ever since then, I've been trying to get more black people to apply. But I've had to do it on my own. I try to make them feel welcome, because when I got here, I felt like there was no one here to guide me, and tell me what to do. Things could be better, but I love it."

Meanwhile, some 200 miles to the southwest, Tameisha Moore was wondering if she would even qualify for UGA. Despite having a 3.97 grade point average and a resume full of school activities, her SAT score was only 1040. She applied to Columbus State and several historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) "for security," but her heart was set on UGA. She spent spring break on the Athens campus with a friend during her senior year in high school and liked it immediately.

"I was a small-town girl and I wanted to step outside the box," she said. "I was overwhelmed by it."

But she wasn't getting much encouragement back home. Moore, a marketing education major, says her black high school counselor was trying to steer her toward a black college. "He was like, 'Are you sure you want to go up there with all those white people?' People were saying, 'That school's so hard. Are you sure you're going to be able to stay up there and not fail?' A lot of people are still looking for me to fail."

Moore says she has had no personal experiences that have made her feel unwelcome, and she believes there are "a lot of smart kids" back home who are not being told that UGA is a realistic goal. "They don't tell them: 'Apply because it's a great school.' I'm not against HBCUs. They say you should go there for the experience.



CHRIS STANFORD, BLACK STAR FOR CROSSTALK

***"We're still blessed with some history we've got to overcome," says Nancy McDuff, admissions director at the University of Georgia.***

But if you've grown up around black people all the time—and my high school was mostly black—there's no [new] experience in an HBCU, because that's what you're used to.

"I wanted diversity," Moore added, "because when I go out into the world and get a job, it's not going to be with just black people, it's going to be white people, it's going to be Asian people, it's going to be Indian people. It's going to be a lot of different people. And up here, I've seen the face of everything. I've seen more than I've seen at home. And that's what I try to tell them."

If there's a refreshing simplicity about the benefits of diversity in the eyes of

***"When I got to orientation (at UGA), I was like, 'Oh my God, this is like North Gwinnett; there's no black people here.'"***

—AUBREY JOHNSON

Johnson and Moore, there's nothing simple about achieving it in the eyes of UGA officials. The litany of obstacles they cite is long:

- It's a supply-and-demand problem, with too much competition for Georgia students from out-of-state universities offering financial incentives that UGA can't match, and historically black schools appealing to racial pride.
- Georgia's K-12 education system, which ranks near the bottom in national assessments, is not preparing students for the rigors demanded by UGA as it grows in academic stature. This reflects a finding by the College Board that only 1.25 percent of the 150,000 students who scored higher than 1300 on the SAT last year were African American.
- The state's acclaimed HOPE scholarship program, which pays the annual

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tuition and fees bill for qualifying Georgia residents, has kept more bright students in the state, making competition for UGA admission even more intense. High school graduates who earn a B average in a curriculum that contains certain core courses are eligible for the scholarships. Despite HOPE, however, the extra costs of attending UGA put it out of reach for some African Americans. The total cost of attending the university is estimated to be \$11,530 a year for in-state students who live on campus, and \$20,900 for out-of-state students who live on campus. In Georgia, 38 percent of blacks live below the poverty level, compared with eight percent of whites.

- Although UGA is developing outreach programs, it lags far behind schools like UNC-Chapel Hill, which has an array of programs that focus on mentoring, preparing for the SAT and identifying prospective minority applicants early in high school.
- Too often, academic success in high school is disparaged, particularly among black males, and only half as many black males as females in Georgia go on to college.
- State budget cuts mean that UGA's enrollment cap on freshmen is unlikely to be raised much in the foreseeable future, despite projections that the number of college applicants in the state will increase by nearly half in the next dozen years or so.

For McDuff, the UGA admissions director, trying to create diversity can be a zero-sum game. "If a guardian angel dropped a billion dollar endowment on me today," she said, "and the state said to use this for diversity scholarships, and I just had that one added component of being

**"We think we're in a position to always acknowledge the past, but we're not living in the past. We're looking forward."**

**—KEITH PARKER, UGA'S ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY**

able to recognize competitive students who are diverse, and give them scholarships, we would improve, and somebody would lose."

Added McDuff: "Everybody's as aggressive as they can be. The problem is, we're all competing for the same students. It's not a win-win situation. Somebody wins, somebody loses."

With flagship universities around the country in ever-higher demand, McDuff argues, the only way to control demand is to become more selective in admissions. "We're becoming less diverse because we're reflecting the high achievers in the country. And that is a problem nationally that I don't think is going to go away. It's a combination of the economy and the cost

of education and where the resources are in K-12—school systems that are not equitable.

"A student from a two-professional family is probably going to have more focus on education, is going to be better-read, is going to test better than someone from a first-generation family going to college. So we've got problems, and it starts in K-12, and a lack of equity, and it is highly reflected in our flagship institutions."

A generation ago, McDuff says, UGA wasn't nearly as selective. If you could do C-level work, you could get in, and the university could accommodate the demand. "Now," she said, "given the demand to attend UGA, driven by growth in population [the state has grown by more than 50 percent in 20 years] and an economic incentive to remain in the state through the HOPE scholarship, you've got to use some characteristics to determine who gets in. When you use demonstrated academic performance, which the university has relied upon heavily—curriculum in high school, grades and test scores—we're not on an equal playing field. And almost every state institution I know has the same problem."

Critics say that the supply-and-demand argument is a cop-out, that aggressive recruitment and programs that prepare students for college will expand the applicant pool among African Americans.

"It's a very easy and dangerous game that's often played, that you can't have access and excellence—they can't co-exist," says Frank Matthews, the publisher of *Black Issues in Higher Education*. "I think the University of Georgia fell into that trap." The University of Virginia is harder to get into than UGA, he notes, "yet they always have a critical mass of black students...the same at Chapel Hill. Even the University of Florida has upped the ante."

Those schools stand apart from UGA, in Matthews' view, "because no one has made a conscientious and determined effort to enroll (black) students at the University of Georgia, and the danger is that the longer they play that game, they exacerbate the problem. And at some point they're going to be so far behind it's almost insurmountable, without retreating to some program that will probably be ruled unconstitutional."

At the University of North Carolina, Archie Ervin, director of minority affairs, points to a consent decree signed by the university in 1981 as a pivotal step on the road to full integration there. The school set an informal and unofficial "soft target" of a ten to 10.5 percent African American enrollment, and worked throughout the 1980s to achieve that. Since the early '90s, black freshman enrollments have reached as high as 12 percent.

"Leadership that comes from the campus is important," said Ervin. "If we hadn't had the last two or three chancellors that we've had, [who] talked the talk and walked the walk and kept the resources and vision there, it wouldn't work here either. Our credentials have gone up and our diversity has gone up, and that hasn't happened anywhere else that we're aware of."

UGA has taken a number of cues from schools like the University of North

Carolina. It has created a department of institutional diversity, which focuses not just on enrollment of minority students, but also on attracting minority faculty and staff. It has created scores of clubs and organizations for minorities. Its Black Affairs Council, which includes all African American students on campus, is offering formal training in the art of recruiting, so that when students return home they will encourage friends and acquaintances to consider UGA.

UGA has established three satellite admissions offices to target high schools in the Atlanta area and in rural south Georgia, and is looking at ways to use black alumni to market the university in forums such as class reunions.

In the wake of the Michigan rulings, and after having its own admissions plan ruled invalid, a UGA faculty committee is considering a policy stating that diversity benefits the university, opening the door for a return to considering race in admissions. The policy defines diversity broadly to include racial and ethnic diversity, geography, language diversity, personal background and life experiences. However, the committee decided recently not to include race as a factor in 2005 admissions, deferring it at least until 2006 because of "legal uncertainties." The committee also recommended that a special office of admissions aimed at minorities be established, and that the university look for ways to offer need-based financial aid.

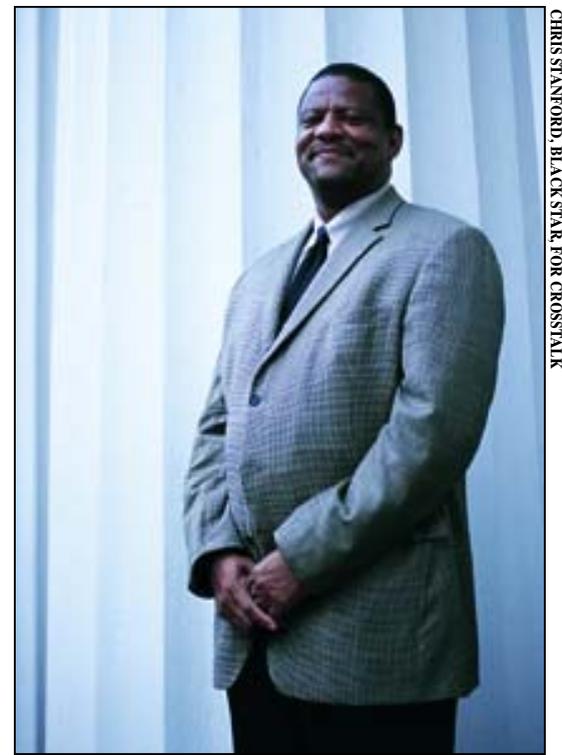
But Stephen Farmer, director of undergraduate admissions at the University of North Carolina, says that affirming a commitment to diversity is only the first step.

"I don't think that having the ability to recognize race as one factor in our admissions process allows us to stop working hard to recruit these (minority) students," said Farmer. "That's only the start of the recruitment process. All the work happens after that. Having affirmative action doesn't mean we don't have to get out and hustle to get students to enroll, because we most certainly do."

"Having that one piece of additional information doesn't make things easier for us in the end," said Farmer, whose staff reads every application, some two or three times. "We have to actually convince these people that Chapel Hill might be a good place for them. We try to start early outreach sometime in their freshman or sophomore year in high school. And that's a big share of the work."

Dr. Louis Castenell, dean of the college of education at the University of Georgia and a catalyst in efforts to diversify the campus, says the university has to be creative in its marketing to blacks, much as a corporation would be, if it wants to accelerate a process that has been in the works less than a generation.

"If you've been in the game for fewer than 15 years, you have to take extraordinary steps to engage people, in a way, to catch up," Castenell said. "And I think the only way you'll ever catch up is to be like a business. You've got to be innovative, and



CHRIS STANFORD, BLACK STAR FOR CROSSTALK

**Keith Parker, associate provost for institutional diversity, hopes to increase the University of Georgia's 5.3 percent black enrollment.**

you've got to give added-value to your product in a way that will attract customers. Just saying, 'We've changed and we're the Bulldog Nation'—that's not going to work."

Steve Pearson, a former college admissions officer who has served as student counselor for 18 years at majority-black Decatur High School in suburban Atlanta, agrees that talk doesn't get the job done.

Pearson says he has had very little contact with UGA, despite having served on an advisory committee of high school counselors there a few years back. He would like to see UGA take some simple steps, like sending out cards with the name of an admissions officer who could be easily reached by phone, or holding workshops with high school counselors and teachers to advise them on ways to encourage prospective UGA applicants.

"What people say is not as important as what they actually do," said Pearson. "And so if you want to recruit students of color, then get out and recruit them. There are ways to do it. I just have not seen a whole heck of a lot of that, personally."

In the final analysis, UGA's progress on diversity probably will depend on students like Aubrey Johnson and Tameisha Moore, who cut the university a lot more slack than do outside critics.

When she first arrived at UGA, Moore felt like she stood out. "But being the kind of person I am," she said, "I take into account Georgia's history and the South's history and America's history. Everybody wants UGA to make these rapid increases in the black population, but it's not going to happen. People don't understand that it's going to take time."

"But I just love UGA," said Moore. "That's what I try to tell the kids when I go back home. It just gets in your blood. Come here, and there's nothing like the experience." ♦

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