Fla. universities promise results for money
02/15/2008 © Bradenton Herald

Florida's universities exist for a reason: to provide a college education to all students in the state who are academically qualified.

With the economy slumping and universities hurting for dollars, the presidents of the schools say they're on the verge of not being able to fulfill that mission.

The presidents of Florida's 11 public universities on Thursday told House Speaker Marco Rubio that they're turning away academically qualified students because they simply don't have the space. And the undergraduate students already in the system are getting shortchanged too - because they're in classes far bigger than their peers in other states.

The presidents said $200 million more a year over the next five years would be sufficient to do what the universities are supposed to do. The money could be garnered through some combination of taxpayer dollars and tuition increases.

The presidents and state university system Chancellor Mark Rosenberg proposed a compact with the state in which lawmakers would promise to give universities the money for the next few years and more freedom to spend it they way university officials see fit.

In return, the schools would guarantee certain benchmarks, such as a certain number of bachelor's degrees granted, or a certain amount of research performed, or a particular national ranking in various categories like research dollars brought in.

"Other states are rapidly moving ahead of us," Rosenberg told Rubio. "And $200 million a year for five years would start to put us back in the game."
The plea came as several university presidents said they're looking at the worst budget situation they've ever seen. The possibility that the university system budget could be cut as much as 4 percent this year and more next year could lead to 2,500 faculty being laid off, said Florida International University President Mitch Maidique.

The state already had the worst student-faculty ratio in the country.

"What we need is not 2,500 less, we need 2,500 more," Maidique said. "We're talking about closing centers, institutes.... Some are talking about reducing enrollment."

Maidique said FIU is turning away students who are qualified - including students with SAT scores above 1,100 and better than B averages.

It's not the best year to ask lawmakers for money. The state is in a budget crisis, with lawmakers looking at a $2.4 billion shortfall for this year and next.

Rubio, R-Miami, and Rep. Joe Pickens, who is the top education budget writer in the House, were receptive to the university proposal but didn't make any commitments.

University of Florida President Bernie Machen noted that part of the budget crisis could be eased if schools had more leeway to increase tuition for undergraduates, the way they do for graduate students.

The universities have asserted that authority, and the Board of Governors has voted to increase tuition by 8 percent next year, but whether the board has the authority to do that is an issue in a pending court case.

Senate President Ken Pruitt, R-Port St. Lucie, has been adamant that tuition can only be set by the Legislature. Pruitt wasn't in town Thursday and didn't respond to a request through his spokeswoman for comment.

More faculty to lower the 31-to-1 faculty-student ratio is the biggest priority for most of the universities. The national average ratio is 25-1.

Another high priority for some universities is getting state-paid health insurance for graduate students. That's one of Machen's big wants at UF, where the university is paying itself for private insurance for 45,000 grad students there.

The universities also badly want to be able to plan on having a minimum amount of money coming in over several years. Typically, they haven't known until the
Legislature passes the budget in the spring what their spending for the coming school year would be, or what tuition they'd be able to charge.

"Faculty want to know, 'Do I have a contract for next year, am I going to teach summer school?' Freshman who haven't even shown up want to know what classes are going to be available, what (their) financial aid package is going to be," said Florida State University President T.K. Wetherell.

University leaders seek money from state
02/15/2008 © Daytona Beach News-Journal

TALLAHASSEE – Saying Florida's higher-education system is at a "historic" point, university presidents made a pitch Thursday to House Speaker Marco Rubio for more state money and increased tuition.

The bottom line: State universities would like an additional $200 million a year for five years, with part of the money coming from tax dollars and part coming from students.

The presidents warned that Florida, which has one of the lowest tuition rates in the country, faces a dire time in its university system. A lack of money has already led to caps on freshmen enrollment, large classes and difficulties in competing with other states for faculty members.

"We view the system facing the biggest threat that it has in its history," said Modesto Maidique, president of Florida International University in Miami.

But this might not be the best time to try to get more state money.

Universities, like other areas of state government, are dealing with the possibility of major budget cuts in the coming months as lawmakers deal with tax shortfalls of more than $2 billion.

That will make it difficult to get additional money when the annual legislative session starts in March. What's more, Gov. Charlie Crist has indicated he does not want to raise tuition, creating a potential political roadblock.

The Florida Board of Governors, which oversees the university system, has approved an 8 percent tuition increase for next year.

But lawmakers have traditionally set tuition rates, and legal questions surround the Board of Governors' ability to increase tuition on its own.
Rubio, R-West Miami, appeared sympathetic to the presidents' arguments, saying the state needs a long-term plan for the university system.

Universities Chancellor Mark Rosenberg said the system will be able to present a funding plan to lawmakers in mid-March.

That prompted Rubio to ask House Schools & Learning Council Chairman Joe Pickens, R-Palatka, where lawmakers would be in mid-March.

"Mired in a budgetary crisis," Pickens quickly responded.

University presidents warn of layoffs
02/15/2008 © Florida Today

TALLAHASSEE -- House Speaker Marco Rubio got an earful from presidents of Florida's major colleges and universities Thursday morning, as they warned of layoffs, lower graduation rates and shrinking programs if more funding is not forthcoming.

"This is historic this year," said Modesto Maidique, president of Florida International University. "We view the system as facing the biggest threat it has in its history."

Lower state revenue has led colleges and universities to tighten their budgets and the Board of Governors voted to recently raise full-time student tuition by 8 percent.

University administrators already cut their budgets in the fall in a $65 million reduction to the state's 11 public colleges and universities.

Board of Governors Chancellor Mark Rosenberg suggested that if universities received about $200 million more a year, in a combination of raised tuition and greater funding from the state, "We can get back in the game. Our fear is we're losing our ability to graduate students . . . . Other states are rapidly moving ahead of us and that hurts our ability to be competitive."

At a morning news conference, Gov. Charlie Crist reiterated his opposition to the tuition increases, saying his $70 billion budget proposal calls for increased state university system spending without it.
Students already face enough hardship during the economic downturn, he said. "I would rather they not do that," Crist said. "I don't think families need to be burdened additionally."

Florida State University president T.K. Wetherell said the state has to find a "more adequate funding formula."

Rubio told the elite group that despite budgetary challenges, higher education remains important.

"It's the community colleges and higher education that will open the doors to the 21st century and send a clear message to what type of economy we're going to have in this state," said Rubio, a Miami Republican.

All 11 presidents of Florida's public colleges and universities attended the meeting, including Florida A&M University President James Ammons, University of West Florida President John Cavanaugh and Florida Gulf Coast University President Wilson G. Bradshaw.

Wetherell, a former Florida House speaker himself, suggested giving each college or university board of trustees more authority over their school.

"Let us have the flexibility to run the universities as businesses," he said.

Ammons said FAMU is graduating more black students with bachelor degrees than any other school in the country.

"We're serving a need that clearly, one that should be met by the state university system of Florida," Ammons said.

Some presidents are considering reducing enrollment.

"We believe we should be a state priority of the highest importance," said Maidique, who said if higher education doesn't receive more funding, some universities could receive lower academic rankings and lose faculty.

Universities' Money Crisis Means Fewer Student Slots
02/15/2008 © Lakeland Ledger
TALLAHASSEE | With more high school students than ever looking to attend a college, Florida's public universities are facing a financial crisis that could lead to fewer admissions, more crowded classrooms and faculty layoffs.

For the first time in recent memory, the 299,000-student system is expected to shrink next year - perhaps by as much as 6 percent, or about 17,000 students.

The enrollment drop means it will be harder for high school students to win admission to one of Florida's11 public universities and it will be harder for community college students to transfer to a university.

Against that backdrop, House Speaker Marco Rubio, R-Miami, on Thursday held an unusual meeting with the university presidents, where they outlined a series of possible solutions - including more autonomy and higher tuition.

But the key factor remains the need for more money - a request that will be extremely difficult to fulfill with the entire state government trapped in a funding freefall caused by a souring economy.

While not making any specific promises, Rubio said a thriving university system was the key to the state's future economy.

"We cannot have that kind of knowledge-based 21st century economy if we do not have a university system to support it," Rubio said.

The university presidents outlined proposals that included a request for $1 billion over the next five years. They talked about developing specific "compacts" for each school that would give universities more freedom but would also spell out what they would do with the money.

And they discussed the need to increase undergraduate tuition, while acknowledging its difficulty as long as it is linked to the Bright Futures scholarship program and a popular pre-paid tuition plan.

But Florida State University President T.K. Wetherell, a former House speaker and legislative budget chairman, said the universities, as well as other state programs, face a more fundamental challenge.

"The reality is the state does not have adequate resources," he said. "You've got to find a more consistent funding mechanism."
The university system has already absorbed a $157 million cut but, like other state agencies, is expected to face even deeper cuts when lawmakers begin their annual session next month.

Wetherell, who has had to reduce his incoming freshman class by 1,000 students, said while the schools could deal with more cuts in the short term, he warned that they could not last for long on "smoke and mirrors."

Other presidents outlined equally bleak prospects, saying budget cuts would likely lead to a worsening of the system's faculty-to-student ratio, already one of the worst in the country, as well as turning away more students who would have easily been admitted to a university in previous years.

"We view the system as facing the biggest threat in its history," said Modesto Maidique, president of Florida International University. He said the system could lose as many as 2,500 faculty members.

"What we need is not 2,500 less, but 2,500 more," he said. Deeper budget cuts will mean "another step backward for the state," Maidique said.

He said FIU, which enrolls the largest contingent of Hispanic students in the state, was now turning away students with an 1150 score on their SATs and 3.3 grade point average. The fall class would have an average SAT score approaching 1200, with minorities accounting for 70 percent of the admissions.

John Delaney, president of the University of North Florida, said his school was no longer taking community college students who had not earned an associate's degree. "There are just so many seats," he said.

At Florida A&M University, President James Ammons said his school has the capacity to accept more new students, but the crunch was coming for admission to key programs like the pharmacy school, where officials had to sort through 1,500 applications for 150 seats.

"This program needs to expand rather than contract," Ammons said.

At the University of Central Florida, President John Hitt said his school thus far has frozen next year's freshman class at the same level as 2007. But he said admissions are tightening, particularly for community college students outside the Orlando area and community college students who don't have their AA degrees.
At the University of Florida, President Bernard Machen said the situation was better for graduate students because the schools have greater authority to adjust tuition rates for those students. But he said health care coverage remains a critical issue for those students, asking Rubio to look at the possibility of allowing the graduate students to become part of the state's health care program for its employees.

State university Chancellor Mark Rosenberg said the reduction in state university seats is the first he has seen in his 30 years in the system. "We're not admitting students that we should be admitting," he said. Fewer university seats "will raise the bar on admissions," with the heaviest impact falling on minority students, he said.

**University leaders' plea: We need $1 billion more**

02/15/2008 © Orlando Sentinel

Florida's 11 university presidents trooped to the Capitol on Thursday to make an unprecedented appeal for an additional $1 billion from the state Legislature over the next five years through a combination of tuition hikes and state aid.

The presidents told House Speaker Marco Rubio, R-West Miami, that they need immediate help because Florida schools are losing the nationwide competition for faculty, students and prestige under the weight of hiring freezes, enrollment caps and program cuts.

"We're very proud of the system we have built . . . but we view the system facing the biggest threat that it has in its history," said Modesto "Mitch" Maidique, president of Florida International University in Miami-Dade County.

The convergence of university leaders on the Capitol was a rare sight, but one that suggests an increasingly desperate mood as they took their case directly to the House speaker.

Rubio praised the long-range approach offered by the leaders. But he acknowledged, "This is about money. It's about resources . . . We have to balance potential solutions against the entire budget and the rest of the economy."

Florida State University President T.K. Wetherell, meanwhile, is trying to rally support for a November ballot proposal that would, for the first time, require the Legislature to set a minimum annual amount -- about $6 billion -- to fund Florida's public universities and community colleges. That's about $1 billion more than the state spends now.
Wetherell is spreading the word through a link on FSU's home page, called "Florida's Financial Crisis -- An Unnatural Disaster."

"Bottom line, without additional resources from the state, we're in big trouble," Wetherell said this week. "We can't just keep making cuts year after year. Just raising tuition isn't going to get us where we need to be."

Universities are staggering from an average 4 percent budget cut imposed last fall by the Legislature, part of $1 billion in overall cuts to the state's $70 billion budget.

With cuts of another $2.5 billion anticipated in coming months, university leaders said something dramatic has to be done to stave off faculty layoffs, tighter enrollment caps and increases to a student-teacher ratio that is already among the worst in the nation.

A tuition increase is an obvious target, the presidents told Rubio Thursday. Florida's $3,400 average tuition rate is the lowest in the nation, compared with a national average of $6,200.

In exchange for the extra money, the presidents said they would meet such performance standards as guaranteeing the number of students they would graduate, faculty size, and the amount of research money attracted by the additional funding.

Senate President Ken Pruitt, R-Port St. Lucie, said he was taken aback by the presidents' proposal.

"One would assume that these are goals they have been pursuing all along . . . ," Pruitt said.

The university system's Board of Governors last month recommended an 8 percent undergraduate tuition hike, which Chancellor Mark Rosenberg said would pump $32 million next year into universities statewide. About $10 million of that would be pumped into need-based tuition aid to help students cover the higher costs.

But even if Gov. Charlie Crist and the Legislature sign off on an ambitious 8 percent tuition hike -- the highest in years -- as much as $170 million more of the presidents' plan would still have to come from the cash-strapped state.
Rubio stopped short of throwing his support behind the presidents' approach. But he acknowledged the need for a long-term strategy to help universities compete with other states.

Amid last fall's budget cuts, Crist reversed his earlier opposition and signed a bill that allowed state universities and community colleges to raise tuition by 5 percent starting in January. The governor had vetoed a similar increase last spring and again failed to include a proposed tuition hike in next year's budget recommendation to the Legislature.

Crist remained wary Thursday.

"I would rather they didn't do it," Crist said, adding, "I think especially in the economy as it is right now, I don't think families need to be burdened additionally with tuition increases. So I would hope that they would not do so, and be more disciplined."

University of Central Florida President John Hitt said the school "could badly use those funds."

"This year we're expecting a cut of between 3 and 4 percent in the base budget," Hitt said. "It means there will be fewer class sections and more students in classes. We're not at a crisis point there, but we're not where we'd like to be as we're perceived around the nation. . . . It's not good."

Like all Florida universities, UCF has capped freshman enrollment for the current year. But with deeper budget reductions on the horizon, Hitt said the university may be forced to reduce admissions for students who get associate's degrees from community colleges, a historic pathway to a bachelor's degree in Florida.

**Battle Over University Tuition in Florida**
02/15/2008 © Tallahassee-WCTV (CBS)

College students in Florida are already paying more. Tuition went up 55 dollars a semester in January. Even so, Florida is still 49th nationally in tuition.

All 11 university presidents were called to the Capitol. They are facing a cut this spring and more cuts next fall. They paint a dire picture.

"The cuts that we have hear being discussed, plus the cuts that are coming could result in the loss of 2,500 faculty members for the state university system," says FIU president Mitch Maidique.
Caps on enrollment are becoming more likely. Even guaranteed transfers from Community colleges may be in doubt. University Chancellor Mark Rosenberg says the answer is more money and flexibility to charge what the market will bear for some majors.
“The net affect would enable us to hire the faculty and advisors, raise the graduation rates,” says Rosenberg.

The schools stressed that they are part of Florida’s economic engine.

They promised to prove that every dollar produces results.

The Governor has already said that he doesn’t want a tuition hike this year. But he hasn’t said he’d veto it if it was sent to him.
“We’ve put together a budget from the Governor’s office that gives some increases at the universities without having to raise tuition,” says Gov. Crist (R).

So battle lines are being drawn. For those seeking a slot at a state university, it is likely to get harder before it gets easier.
The universities say they need as much as 200 million more a year for the next 5 years to continue to improve the quality of a college education.

University Cuts
02/15/2008 © WMBB ABC 13 Panama City

A battle over how much tuition Universities can charge in the wake of pending budget cuts is brewing at the state capitol. In a meeting between the House Speaker and all 11 University presidents, there seems to be agreement that some tuition hike was needed to make cuts less severe. But one important voice is saying no.

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Mitch Maidique is the F-I-U President.

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“We’ve put together a budget from the Governor’s office that gives some increases at the universities without having to raise tuition.”

–If they sent it to you? Crist: “If they sent it to me? I hope they don’t.”

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Legislators down on humanities
02/15/2008 © Daytona Beach News-Journal

Your Florida Legislature loves the sciences. Except when it doesn't.

It wants more science students. It wants more scientific research here. It wants the state to diversify its agriculture/tourism/retirement economy with high-tech jobs.

Yet it also wants to spend less on universities. In recent years it advanced bills that would have allowed students to sue their professors when they are offended by the ideas teachers transmit. Ideas like evolution.

And speaking of the E word, Republican legislative leaders will be watching to see whether the State Board of Education includes the teaching of evolution in the state's standards for teaching science. If it does, the Legislature's experts on biological sciences have threatened to file bills to overrule the decision and maybe even insert some form of creationism into biology classes.
But wait. The Florida Legislature still loves science. It's just the students, scientists and professors it distrusts.

So true to form, Sen. Jeremy Ring, D-Margate, wants to show our devotion to science by punishing students who aren't science majors. Those slacker English majors, art students who dress in black, and know-it-all philosophy majors. You know the types.

Ring would penalize those taking majors outside the so-called STEM areas (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) plus health care by reducing their Bright Futures scholarship money.

He calls this an "economic development tool" because everybody knows nobody makes money from what the liberal arts, social sciences and business departments put out. You know, because banking, insurance, publishing, broadcasting, the entertainment industry, urban planning and teaching just don't contribute to the state's economic development.

You know it's hard times ahead for higher education when Republicans dust off the rhetoric they usually reserve for welfare recipients and use it on college students.

The Miami Herald quoted Rep. Stan Jordan, R-Jacksonville, this week complaining about students who get Bright Futures scholarships and then use their tuition pre-payment plans to buy BMWs. He complained about an entitlement mentality.

Right here, I say trouble right here in River City: We've got scholarship queens tooling around in their Bright Futures Cadillacs. And with your hard-spent lottery dollars!

Bright Futures, it should be pointed out, is funded with lottery dollars. If it didn't exist, the lottery could be used the way it was intended -- to replace state education dollars and free up money for tax cuts and fund stuff that has real economic development wallop -- like money for professional sports teams.

It galls your Florida legislators that students use this money to study ideas they don't like one bit.

"I think universities need to start looking at the system and saying, 'OK, how many more psychology and philosophy majors should we be producing?' " House Speaker Marco Rubio was quoted as asking Wednesday by St. Petersburg Times.
And the implied answer is "maybe three or four."

The message: Florida's vibrant economy needs landscapers, telemarketers and people to put paper umbrellas into tall glasses. Anything else is a frill.

Yes, Florida loves science, but we hate paying to expose kids to funny ideas, and we'll fund colleges accordingly.

**Our position: Changing Bright Futures is good way to improve universities**
02/15/2008 © Orlando Sentinel

Just look where Florida's universities rank on national lists of top-quality schools.

It's embarrassing that only the state's flagship school -- the University of Florida -- manages to rank in the top 50 in a national magazine's annual listing of America's universities.

But there are other rankings that ought to worry Floridians a lot more: No. 50 in tenured faculty-student ratios; No. 2 in the South for cutting per-student spending; No. 50 in tuition.

These are the rankings Gov. Charlie Crist and lawmakers must improve if Florida is to produce the skilled college graduates it needs to diversify its economy.

It starts with money. Florida's absurdly low tuition is the chain holding state universities back. And Florida's Bright Futures Scholarship program is the anchor attached to that chain.

The Legislature and Mr. Crist have two options: Spend a lot more tax money on higher education, or reform the Bright Futures scholarship to let more students pay part of their costs.

The state Board of Governors has a common-sense proposal to change Bright Futures from an entitlement enjoyed by those who need it the least and make it a scholarship that rewards the best students, helps those in financial need and provides incentives to the math and science majors this state needs.
The plan's been received about as well as Florida State University's Chief Osceola headlining UF's Gator Growl. Senate President Ken Pruitt is the Bright Futures program's biggest booster, and he's not willing to make the needed changes. He says he wants to provide students access to college, but what kind of education are they getting?

Florida's tuition is $3,400 a year, about half the national average. Florida can't afford to hire the best professors. It averages 31 students per tenured and tenure-tracked professor -- the national average is 25. The University of Central Florida has 48 students for each of those professors.

The state has slashed the money spent for each student. Florida is one of only four of 16 Southern states that cut per-student spending on universities between 2001 and 2006. That trend will never lead to quality in Florida's universities.

The Board of Governors would cap Bright Futures and spend about $200 million on scholarships for the best students, $100 million to help students who truly need financial aid, and $100 million for those who want to major in math or the sciences.

Once Bright Futures is capped, the Board of Governors proposes to raise tuition a little each year, working Florida toward the national average over time.

Lawmakers should listen.

The only way to brighten the futures of Florida's students is to provide them a quality university system.

Office of the Chancellor
No Articles Today
Florida A&M University
No Articles Today
Florida Atlantic University
FAU eyes practical union in doctorate
02/15/2008 © Palm Beach Post

BOCA RATON — Florida Atlantic University officials are proposing a unique Ph.D. in geosciences to train professionals working on natural resource
management and South Florida-specific problems such as coastal erosion and freshwater scarcity.

The doctoral program, which faces a committee of FAU board of trustee members next week for initial approval, would be the only one in Florida to combine geography and geology.

Also, instead of focusing on traditional course work, FAU's students would be specifically trained to enter the area workforce with organizations such as the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the South Florida Water Management District, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and private environmental consultant companies.

"I can see a very clear need for an expanded program at FAU to provide this level of a degree," said Mike Walther, president of Coastal Tech Corp., an environmental consulting firm based in Vero Beach.

Walther's firm handles beach erosion and works on implementing Florida's beach management program.

But when he recently needed to hire a geologist to partner with his coastal engineers, he found his new employee in Canada.

"Unquestionably, by our own experience, there is a growing need for coastal geologists," Walther said.

FAU's doctorate would be crafted to include both full-time students and current professional geoscientists, who would continue to work while taking courses.

Students would have to specialize in one of five areas, including hydrology and water resources, urban development and marine paleontology.

Gary Perry, dean of FAU's College of Science, said the new degree was developed with input from working geoscientists, environmental companies and government organizations. It would use current faculty and staff and should not cost the school additional money.

"This really addresses the needs of us down here in South Florida," Perry said. "With global warming, climate change and Everglades restoration, the time for this is right."

The degree must be approved by FAU's full trustee board and the Board of Governors, which oversees Florida's 11 public universities.
FAU Researchers Hope To Harness Ocean Waves For Energy - Education News Story - WPBF West Palm Beach

02/15/2008 © Palm Beach Gardens-WPBF (ABC)

DANIA BEACH, Fla. -- Just 15 miles off Florida's coast, the world's most powerful sustained ocean current - the mighty Gulf Stream - rushes by at nearly 8.5 billion gallons per second. And it never stops.

To scientists, it represents a new, plentiful and uninterrupted source of clean energy.

Florida Atlantic University researchers said the current could someday be used to drive thousands of underwater turbines, produce as much energy as perhaps 10 nuclear plants and supply one-third of Florida's electricity. A small test turbine is expected to be installed within months.

The university's Center of Excellence in Ocean Energy Technology is working to develop the new system. The goal is for big energy and engineering companies to eventually build huge underwater arrays of turbines.

One fear, though, is the "Cuisinart effect": The spinning underwater blades could chop up fish and other creatures.

Thanks to all who made debate at FAU a success
02/15/2008 © Palm Beach Post

On behalf of the entire Florida Atlantic University community, I would like to extend sincere thanks to all of the individuals and organizations that provided extraordinarily comprehensive support for the nationally televised Republican Presidential Primary Debate that was held on FAU's Boca Raton campus. This group includes the generous donors who contributed more than $250,000 to the FAU Foundation to cover costs. Also the volunteers - primarily students, alumni, faculty and staff - who gave their time, energy and talents to make sure that all of the university's needs were covered as our campus took center stage nationally.

I would like to offer special thanks to the Boca Raton Police Department, under the direction of Chief Dan Alexander, which worked in close coordination with the FAU Police Department to make sure that the event went smoothly every
step of the way and that all visitors, from the five presidential candidates to the 1,500-plus audience members and media representatives, were in a safe environment. The university deeply appreciates the expert assistance that was provided by Capt. Shawn Fagan, Capt. Matthew Duggan and the 58 other members of the Boca police who were on campus throughout the night.

FAU was proud to have been chosen by Leadership Florida, MSNBC, NBC, the Florida Press Association and Florida Public Broadcasting Inc. to serve as the setting for the debate, but would not have been able to take advantage of this opportunity without the help of many sponsors: Office Depot, the Geo Group Inc., JM Family Enterprises Inc., Woolbright Development Inc., the Alan B. Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency, AutoNation, the Caron Foundation, Gunster, Yoakley and Stewart, P.A., the JKG Group and the Pugliese Co. In-kind sponsors included Chartwells, Dell Computers, PAETEC, the Residence Inn of Boca Raton and Toshiba.

We thank everyone who joined hands with FAU to bring a memorable lesson in grass-roots democracy to South Florida. It was a night we'll remember for the rest of our lives.

FRANK T. BROGAN, president

Florida Atlantic University

Boca Raton

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FGCU postpones degree programs
02/15/2008 © Ft. Myers News-Press

TALLAHASSEE — Florida Gulf Coast University is delaying three new academic programs it planned to introduce this fall, pulling back the reigns as Florida's Legislature eyes more budget cuts.

FGCU hoped to roll out a bachelor’s program in journalism, a master’s in mathematics and a master's program in environmental science for the fall 2008 semester. Each program was in its developmental stages but was forecast for board approval this spring.

Delaying journalism will save $290,000; mathematics, $117,000; and environmental studies, $90,000, according to FGCU Chief of Staff Susan Evans.
FGCU President Wilson Bradshaw, who joined other college presidents Thursday in Tallahassee, has decided not to tamper with plans to add $2 million worth of new faculty. The new professors would teach psychology, sociology, communications, composition, microbiology, cell physiology, chemistry, mathematics, art history, economics, accounting, physical therapy and criminal justice. FGCU also will add a faculty position in the library, along with endowed professorships in landscape design, environmental education and music.

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“This is historic this year,” said Modesto Maidique, president of Florida International University. “We view the system as facing the biggest threat it has in its history.”

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“We believe we should be a state priority of the highest importance,” said Maidique, who said if higher education doesn’t receive more funding, some universities could receive lower academic rankings and lose faculty.

12 now being considered for provost
02/15/2008 © Ft. Myers News-Press

Florida Gulf Coast University trimmed its provost applicant pool Thursday to 12 semifinalists, but its affirmative action policy required that another minority be added to the list.

FGCU has hiring policies that mandate diversity in recruitment and hiring along race and gender lines. The initial pool of 11 semifinalists contained nine men and two women, two of whom were minorities.

**SEMIFINALISTS**

- Jeremy Heafner: Associate vice chancellor for research and innovation at University of Colorado-Colorado Springs.
- Thomas Hanley: Professor of chemical engineering at Auburn University. Hanley also applied for FGCU's presidency, but was not among the initial 20 applicants considered for the job.
- Richard Helldobler: Associate provost and associate vice president for academic affairs at California University of Pennsylvania.
- Ronald Hy: Dean of the college of arts and sciences at Texas A&M University.
- Donna Kuizenga: Dean of the college of liberal arts at University of Massachusetts-Boston.
- Inessa Levi: Dean of the college of arts and sciences at Western Illinois University.
- David Moon: Senior vice chancellor for academic affairs at University of Colorado-Colorado Springs.
- Walter Ornes: Dean of the college of sciences and biology professor at Southern Utah University.
- Robert Prezant: Dean of the college of science and mathematics at Montclair State University.
- Yatish Shah: Former provost at University of Central Missouri.
- Ronald Toll: Vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty at Lebanon Valley College.
- V.K. Unni: Vice president for academic affairs at Bryant University.
Director of Equity and Compliance Cheryl Seals-Gonzalez asked committee Chairwoman Donna Price Henry, dean of the college of arts and sciences, to modify its pool to improve diversity. Committee members then decided on Yatish Shah, former provost at University of Central Missouri, but made it clear Shah wasn't selected solely because of his race.

"We may be trying to diversify the pool, but in so doing we are not choosing a candidate simply to diversify the pool," said Halycon St. Hill, committee member and professor in the College of Health Professions. "This guy is being added because he has the talent."

Before his stint at Central Missouri, Shah was provost and executive vice chancellor at University of Missouri-Rolla, senior vice president for research and graduate studies at Clemson University, and engineering dean at Drexel University and University of Tulsa. He holds a bachelor's degree from University of Michigan, and a master's and doctorate from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in chemical engineering.

Committee members, all FGCU employees, do not have access to race or gender information; only human resources reviews that data to ensure compliance with federal guidelines.

"He was on the bubble, and now he isn't," said Mike Rollo, vice president of student affairs.

Among the list of semifinalists are two vice chancellors who happen to work at the same Colorado university, one former provost, one professor, one associate provost, five college deans and two vice presidents.

In November, FGCU President Wilson Bradshaw asked Provost Bonnie Yegidis to step down, citing his desire to have a strong second-in-command with oversight beyond academics. The new hire could have the title of provost or senior executive vice president.

Semifinalists will have initial interviews March 1-2. Committee members then will select five finalists whose campus interviews run from March 10-25.

**Editorial: Florida Gulf Coast University**

02/15/2008 © Naples Daily News

Over the years we have advocated long and hard for “advanced research” at Florida Gulf Coast University.
Though we have tried to explain this means pushing science to the next level — inventing better ways to do things, patenting those breakthroughs and cashing in on the proceeds, ideally with local production and marketing — the concept remains a fuzzy, pie-in-the-sky academic notion for some.

We welcome a specific example every time one comes along. We have one from our story the other day about how FGCU is using a U.S. Department of Defense grant to combat global biological weapons.

FGCU used the $1.5 million on state-of-the-art lab equipment for a team of three staff biochemists working on detecting sinister threats from chemicals and viruses, for example, and curing the sick.

Their work would have applications among soldiers as well as civilians.

From this research, FGCU has already applied for five patents which would enable the university to participate in royalties if the breakthroughs are put to work.

The researchers are getting help with that from FGCU’s College of Business.

This is the kind of academic/business activity that attracts more of the same — from the private sector as well. It leads to faculty jobs and cutting-edge opportunities for students at the undergraduate as well as graduate levels.

In sum, it comprises good, clean, sustainable, good-paying economic diversity immune from the fluctuations of tourism and development.

For a university only 10 years old, FGCU, whose main mission remains undergraduate education, is far ahead of the curve. Yet, FGCU and Southwest Florida are in competition with many other, better-established research communities. That is why it is good to see the Economic Development Council of Collier County and other business organizations starting to take advanced research seriously and making it a high priority. There is work to be done, and the results are worth it.
TALLAHASSEE - Florida State University placed its athletics department on a two-year probation and plans to reduce scholarships in several sports following its investigation into an academic-misconduct involving about 60 student-athletes mostly tied to exams for an online music course.

The NCAA can either approve FSU’s recommendations or make its own regarding penalties and probation. FSU’s self-imposed probation began Wednesday.

"If you have another violation, the penalty can be very severe," FSU Provost Dr. Larry Abele said of the probation's significance.

In a 30-page report delivered to the NCAA on Thursday, the university listed a reduction of grant-in-aids among the six punitive actions it has or will take.

The report did not specify how many scholarships would be affected or in what sports. The scholarship reduction for each effected sport to reflect the number of student-athletes involved.

FSU President T.K. Wetherell is hopeful the scholarship losses could be spread over multiple recruiting classes in some cases.

The university president also said he expected the NCAA to conduct its own investigation into the matter.

"They have to," Wetherell said. "That's the way their organization (handles these matters). They'll come in and ask for everything."

The report reflected the initial findings first made public in September that learning specialist Brenda Monk and an unnamed tutor provided improper assistance to student-athletes. According to the report, Monk had one student-athlete complete an online exam for another, and also "provided answers directly or indirectly to student-athletes in the online course."

It was Monk's case which led to the university's in-house investigation -- and that investigation brought to light allegations a tutor had provided answers to an exam in an online music course during the 2005-06 and 2006-07 academic years.
Twenty-two football players, including walk-ons, were suspended from the Music City Bowl in December as the first game of a four-game penalty for their involvement. The length of the suspension -- roughly 30 percent of a season -- was approved by the NCAA's student-athlete reinstatement staff. Previously, two other football players were suspended during the season as they were determined to be part of the 22 student-athletes from multiple sports who were involved.

Other sports, including men's and women's basketball, have already been affected by the 30-percent ruling for involved student-athletes.

No more than 12 scholarship football players are expected to miss the first three games of the 2008 season.

Other punitive action taken by FSU includes:

- The non-renewal of contracts for Monk and the unnamed tutor who provided answers for tests on the online course;
- A four-hour training program on NCAA compliance that will be required of athletic department administrative and non-administrative staff members;
- Changes within the athletic department's senior administration and athletic academic support services staff. This includes the Thursday resignation of another member of the athletic academic support services department.

Additionally, student-athletes who admitted to wrongdoing and are currently enrolled at FSU were required to take the course again this semester.

"We feel we did the right thing," Wetherell said.

**New rules, technology to minimize cheating at FSU**
02/15/2008 © Tallahassee Democrat

Florida State University students hoping to take advantage of relaxed rules when taking online exams are now likely studying more since officials have made cheating more difficult.

In wake of the recent FSU academic misconduct, which involved mostly cheating on online tests, officials have increased security measures and are planning more safeguards for the future.

"The students need to show up at a certain time, show a picture I.D. and have someone watch them take the test," FSU Provost Larry Abele said.
Some of these rules were in place in some classes but have now become universal. Before changes were made, some students found ways to download tests and e-mail them to themselves or someone else.

"We fixed that by modifying the software," Abele said.

Other security measures now include banning cell phones and hats from course sites. Students could put notes on the bill of their cap, Abele said.

Before the new safeguards were in place, a student also could open the exam browser to fill the whole screen, and open another browser behind that one with notes on it or a search page for pulling answers from the Web.

"Now, when they take the exam, only the exam browser can be opened," Abele said.

University officials aren't stopping there, they are considering having a machine that scans a student's thumbprint to take a test and having a camera that picks up sight and sound and would turn 360 degrees at testing sites. Also, they're considering having a software program that monitors computer activity while a student takes a test.

"It will tell us if the student got around (security measures) and opened another browser," Abele said.

But, officials acknowledge, when it comes to cheating, technology can only go so far.

"If somebody really wants to cheat, they will find a way," Abele said. "But we have an obligation to minimize the cheating."

**FSU expands healthcare in Gadsden County schools**

02/15/2008 © FSView

The Florida State University College of Medicine is working to help reduce health disparities among Gadsden County children through a project funded by FSU Dance Marathon, which is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday at the Tallahassee-Leon County Civic Center.

The College of Medicine has been working with the Gadsden County Department of Health and Gadsden County School District to expand services in
student health centers at James A. Shanks Middle School and George W. Munroe Elementary School in Quincy.

Last year, 1,400 FSU student volunteers raised $315,000 through Dance Marathon. Proceeds from the annual event are split evenly between the FSU college of medicine and the Children's Miracle Network. Funds raised through the 2008 Dance Marathon once again will be used to fund pediatric outreach efforts of the college of medicine, such as the project in Gadsden County schools.

College of medicine faculty members have been working part time in the school-based health centers since last fall, expanding the clinics to include full-service primary care, as well as mental health services.

The college of medicine welcomed Susan LaJoie, a nurse practitioner with more than 23 years of experience, to its faculty in January. LaJoie is assigned to oversee clinical operations in the Gadsden school health centers on a full-time basis.

In addition, medical school faculty, FSU medical students and psychology graduate students work in the health centers on a part-time basis. Involvement affords the students the opportunity to experience an integrated model of clinical and behavioral health-care services in a community setting.

Compared to most other counties in Florida, residents of Gadsden County have more healthcare problems and fewer treatment options.

"Rates of teen pregnancy, heart disease, obesity and diabetes are far higher in Gadsden County than for the rest of Florida," said Dr. Maggie Blackburn, assistant professor of family medicine and rural health at the College of Medicine. "School-based health clinics have been shown to provide a healthcare safety net for school-age children, so we believe this project will have a measurable impact."

Gadsden County also has an infant-mortality rate double the national average and higher than that of 75 countries.

Data, however, suggest that early intervention, preventive care and health education could improve some of these health outcomes.

The college of medicine's involvement is consistent with its mission in several ways, including the improvement of access to primary care and mental health services for a medically underserved population, and providing service-oriented learning opportunities for faculty and students.
Doors open for Florida State students to go 'Hollywood'
02/15/2008 © FSView

With the University of Texas-Los Angeles Center opening its doors to college students from across the country, Florida State University students will have the chance to gain both experience and academic credit while rubbing elbows with the biggest names in the business. The "Semester in Los Angeles" program allows students to perfect their craft right in the birthplace of the American entertainment industry.

Founded in 2005 by the University of Texas at Austin, the program is offered year-round, with both graduate and undergraduate programs.

Students enrolled in the program are also required to complete a 150-hour entertainment industry internship for academic credit.

Since students working five days a week would finish halfway through the semester, they are encouraged to take as many internships as they can.

"Companies out here are thrilled to have interns," said Phil Nemy, executive director for the UTLA Center. "If you represent yourself professionally, and say 'I'm anxious to learn and prove to you that I could be a potentially great employee, they're definitely anxious to take you. And your biggest tool for finding employment in the industry is the network of contacts you have."

Nemy said the chance to network within the industry has already proved invaluable to some of their alumni.

"One of the students that was out here interned with a couple of TV shows," Nemy said. "She got a job as the executive producer's assistant for Grey's Anatomy, managed to get into the writer's room once, and is now employed as a staff writer for Grey's."

He also described the benefits of connections made within the school itself, citing one young hopeful who is trying to make it big with the help of her music professor.

"One girl that was here was looking for a career as a singer," Nemy said. "The instructor who teaches our music courses is a two-time Grammy-winning record producer. He was so impressed with her voice that he helped her cut a demo
album at Capitol Records. They're about to start shopping around to get her a record deal."

While attending UTLA, students also get the chance to live among Hollywood's next generation of writers, producers and actors. The apartment complex which houses all UTLA students is a five-minute walk from campus, and houses students from other universities in the area in similar programs, providing yet another opportunity to build personal contacts which could one day prove beneficial in the business.

"It's a very popular complex for actors coming in for pilot season," explained Nemy. "Jennifer Love Hewitt lived there when she started out. And it is probably the nicest complex you'll ever live in during your college years."

UTLA also offers as many "extra-curricular" activities to its students as possible. Chances to go to movie premieres, observe recording sessions and tours of television sets have all been offered to students. The sets of ER, Numbers, Without a Trace and The West Wing (where students met actors Martin Sheen and Bradley Whitford) have opened their doors to UTLA.

"We've actually gone into the newsroom while the noon news was being broadcast," Nemy said. "During the commercial break, the anchor asked who in our group was seriously interested in sitting in his chair one day. One girl raised her hand immediately, and he had them bring a chair over and said 'sit here next to me. Don't move and don't say a word.'"

When the camera crew came back from commercial, they "went right on with the news," recounted Nemy. "She was just sitting next to him just off camera, while he finished broadcasting the news live." She got to see how it really was done."

The program at UTLA is open to students from any major, and Nemy stated that students with any background can find work.

"Even biology majors can work here," Nemy said. "Someone with that background has to be on set or in the writer's room, telling the producers if that reaction or medical situation can really take place."

According to Nemy, it all depends on the amount of drive an individual has.

"It all comes down to the student," said Nemy. "If you put in the effort, take the time to build the relationships, ask good questions, and work hard, it will happen for you. If you sit back and expect the industry to come to you, it's not gonna happen."
SGA implements new way to vote
02/15/2008 © FSView

The national primaries are not the only elections on which Florida State University students are focusing. The Student Government Association will hold their spring elections Feb. 27, and this time there will be a few changes.

Students will have the option either to vote online or to vote at one of the six polling stations around the campus.

"Last year when I was running for Student Senate only two percent of the student body voted," said Student Senator Bobby Seifter. "The idea for voting online had been in the works for a couple of years in order to make voting more accessible to students who may not be on campus that day."

Students can access the SGA Web site, sga.fsu.edu, and log on with their Blackboard username and password to vote.

On Tuesday, Feb. 19 there will be a mock election to work out all of the glitches with the program.

Students will be able to log on and vote for the presidential candidate that they would vote for in the national presidential election.

"The system is very secure, and the results will go directly to the student database," said Joyce Howard, the director of Student Affairs. "After students vote they will receive an e-mail confirmation to their garnet account. The system will only allow students to vote for candidates from their college according to their major."

With the new online voting, SGA hopes that they can give students more opportunities to get involved with the election process and let their voice be heard.

"SGA provides a gap between the administration and the student body," Seifter said. "Members of the SGA have more connections with the administrative staff and can provide students with answers with concerns they may have. Also, SGA is in charge of budgeting Registered Student Organizations and Special Programs. If a student is interested in starting an organization, the best place to
start is with the Senate, and we can even assist students in writing a constitution of their organization."

In order for students to be educated on the Student Government parties and candidates, there will be various Facebook groups describing the various party platforms.

Students will be able to log on next Tuesday, Feb. 19 to sga.fsu.edu for the mock election to test out the system in order to work out any kinks before the SGA elections.

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**New College of Florida**

**No Articles Today**

**University of Central Florida**

**Just what the doctor ordered**

02/15/2008 © Central Florida Future

President John Hitt and Dean Deborah German toasted champagne in test tubes to celebrate the preliminary accreditation of the UCF College of Medicine on Monday at a party honoring the milestone.

German, dean of the UCF College of Medicine, announced that 28 out of the 40 scholarships for the inaugural class have been funded. This is an increase of five scholarships since the preliminary accreditation was announced on Feb. 6.

"I am totally and completely delighted by our success," German said. "Last month, we were building a medical school. This month, we are a medical school."

Special guests included donors to the medical school, faculty and staff, members of the Board of Trustees and members of the Florida Legislature who helped the College of Medicine become a reality.

The party was themed to the anticipated medical school and included touches that made the party unique. Guests were served soft drinks in beakers and were given pens that looked like syringes. The centerpiece on each table was a container of medical supplies ranging from cotton swabs to bandages.

The cake, which looked like a prescription pad, sat on a gurney until it was cut and distributed to guests at the end of the party.
Hitt expressed thanks to the Board of Governors for passing the legislation allowing the medical school be built.

"They did a very courageous and honorable thing," Hitt said.

He highlighted the potential economic benefits of the medical school - the creation of 25,000 jobs and an added $6.4 billion to the Central Florida economy.

The medical school has teamed up with several major forces in the medical world for its "medical city."

The Burnham Institute for Medical Research, Nemours Children's Hospital, a Veteran's Administration Hospital and M.D. Anderson Cancer Research Institute will also be in Lake Nona as part of the medical city spanning more than 50 acres.

When introducing German, Provost and Executive Vice President Terry Hickey said he couldn't imagine any other new college of medicine dean who hit the ground running and accomplished as much as German did during the 14 months she's been at UCF.

Rasesh Thakkar, a senior managing director for Tavistock Group, one of the major donors to the medical school, gave a toast in a quirky rhyme at the end of the party highlighting the college's accomplishments thus far.

The medical school's next major task is recruiting its first class of 40 students for fall 2009.

"We're trying to build the very best medical school for the very best students because that's what UCF deserves," German said.

Each student will receive a scholarship of $40,000 for each of the four years they are in medical school. Half the money will be for tuition, and the other half for living expenses - giving each student a total of $160,000 over the four years.

Andrew Howard, a sophomore biology major, said he looks forward to UCF getting its own medical school and likes the way the curriculum is designed to meet the individual needs of students.

"Sometimes I think the way medical schools teach is overrated," Howard said, "so individualization is pretty awesome."
Student Government Association President Brandie Hollinger was there to celebrate the College of Medicine's accomplishment.

"I'm glad we can finally start recruiting," Hollinger said. "We'll have a really good first class, and it says a lot about UCF in all areas - academics especially."

**Equality for weed, alcohol offenses**  
02/15/2008 © Central Florida Future

The student body will have the chance to influence change in the Golden Rule when they vote in the SGA Presidential Elections next week.

The SGA Senate passed a resolution to put a referendum on the ballot asking students their opinions on the issue of equal punishment for marijuana and alcohol.

The ballot will pose the following question to the student body:

"Do you support revising the Golden Rule setting an equal maximum punishment guideline for minor, on-campus marijuana and alcohol offenses for first, second and third time offenses, as defined by the Office of Student Conduct?"

Sen. Brendon Rivard is one of the senators who sponsored the resolution in senate.

"We're doing it to compare marijuana to alcohol and allow people to realize that marijuana is safer and more responsible, and people should not be punished more harshly for it," Rivard said.

The inspiration for the resolution came from Safer Alternative for Enjoyable Recreation (SAFER), an organization that is fighting for equal treatment of marijuana and alcohol at colleges across the country.

"Our organization started in response to the alcohol-related deaths on college campuses and other alcohol related problems," said Mason Tvert, executive director of SAFER. "We really just think it makes no sense to push students to drink rather than use marijuana."

Rivard emphasized that he and NORML feel that alcohol is much more dangerous of a drug than marijuana.
"To punish someone for marijuana is telling someone to go get drunk, go drink, go choose the more dangerous drug," Rivard said. "Why punish students for making a safer choice?"

The resolution went through the Senate on third reading on Feb. 7 with only one vote against it.

If the student body votes in favor of the referendum, the long process begins to try to change the Golden Rule. The referendum would go before the Golden Rule review committee.

Similar policy changes have been successful across the country at colleges such as Florida State University, University of Maryland, University of Texas-Austin, University of Colorado-Boulder, Colorado State University, University of Washington, George Washington University and the College of William and Mary.

Tvert said he doesn't think it's the university's job to be policing students. He also said that he thinks the university is sending the wrong message.

"Basically, it's well-known that they face far greater punishments for marijuana than alcohol, and more so for students 21 and up, there is no punishment for consuming alcohol," Tvert said.

Both presidential tickets have their opinions on the issue.

"We are definitely in support of students being given second chances for mistakes they make," said Logan Berkowitz, a presidential candidate. "The truth is, no more students get kicked out for alcohol than marijuana. Their punishments are very, very similar to be honest."

Vice presidential candidate Austin Smith, who is running against Berkowitz, had a different opinion.

"Officially, the campaign is for making changes to conduct, rule and UCF policies so UCF students are directly included," Smith said. "I am definitely going to vote yes on this referendum."

The students will have their say next week when they vote on Feb. 18, 19 and 20.
USF Limits Student Transfers
02/15/2008 © Tampa Bay Online

TAMPA - Students transferring from other colleges into the University of South Florida have long enjoyed an open door. From now on, they will have a harder time gaining entry.

As budget cuts force the university to reduce enrollment, its leaders said Thursday they plan to restrict the number of transfer students. USF will not accept any more students transferring in next fall as freshmen or sophomores, and it will place a higher standard on those seeking entry as juniors and seniors.

Those restrictions could be in place over the next three years as USF and the state's 10 other public universities grapple with a looming budget deficit. For USF, the deficit could grow to more than $50 million.

USF's decision comes after the state's university oversight board ordered schools to admit fewer students.

Meanwhile, university leaders appealed to legislative leaders Thursday to insulate their schools from the deepest cuts.

Florida's 11 university presidents and university system Chancellor Mark Rosenberg told House Speaker Marco Rubio in a meeting Thursday that they need an additional $200 million every year for the next five years to "get back in the game" of higher education.

USF's struggle is no different from other schools. Its appeal for transfer students is unique, however. USF admissions officers long have touted that they are the top destination for transfer students nationwide, citing statistics from U.S. News and World Report.

With its plan to trim enrollment, the university may not hold that distinction much longer.
Historically, the university has accepted transfer students who had fewer than 60 credit hours from other colleges and universities, or who never received an associate's degree from a community college.

Nearly 1,000 such students enrolled at USF this academic year. The university has accepted some transfers for next fall, but will accept no more, USF Provost Ralph Wilcox said.

Also, Wilcox said students transferring in as juniors and seniors, or who have received associate's degrees, should have a 3.0 grade-point average. If they've dipped below that mark, he said, "they're probably going to find it more difficult to be admitted here."

Class Size Cuts Mandated
The university still plans to freeze freshman enrollment, which was at about 4,200 students at the Tampa campus this year. The deadline for fall admissions is March 1. As the university reaches its enrollment targets for all levels, Wilcox said it will encourage prospective students to attend its regional campuses in St. Petersburg, Lakeland and Sarasota, where there's room for modest growth.

Without reducing enrollment at all state universities, the budget cuts and their resulting layoffs will only widen the student-to-faculty ratio, which at 31-to-1 is the largest of any state nationwide.

"We're doing all we can to protect the integrity of the academic programs," Wilcox said.

A drop in state tax collections has left a $157 million hole in the collective university system budget. Last week, Chancellor Rosenberg wrote university presidents warning that the current university enrollment statewide of 298,000 students would have to trim by 17,000. He did not specify numbers for each school.

What universities want is a $1 billion investment over the next five years, and they want a mix of tuition increases and state investment to reach that goal. Rosenberg said that would boost faculty ranks and underwrite 1 million more bachelor's degrees by 2027.

Rubio said he was open to a 5 percent or 6 percent tuition increase, reiterating his statement the night before on a call-in radio talk show in Tallahassee that a tuition increase around 5 percent would be "sustainable" if colleges and universities plow a portion of that money back into need-based financial aid.
Tuition Fight
But the universities' Board of Governors has said that 5 percent isn't enough. Last month, the board approved an 8 percent increase in tuition, with 30 percent of the revenue going to aid students who need the money. It did so regardless of the Legislature's and governor's action this year.

The Legislature and Board of Governors are locked in a court battle over who has authority to raise rates. And Gov. Charlie Crist has said he doesn't want to raise the costs facing college students.

An 8 percent tuition increase, Rosenberg said, would net an additional $32 million, and would pay for 200 more faculty members. It also would raise costs for a full-time undergraduate resident of Florida by $93 a semester.

Having trimmed the current budget by about $1 billion last fall, a continuing plummet in revenue has lawmakers planning to make additional cuts during the first week of the regular session, which starts March 4.

House and Senate leaders are negotiating exactly how much to cut, but budget writers in both chambers have predicted overall trims around $300 million to $400 million - or more.

Despite the funding increases university presidents want, legislators are discussing cutting state funding to universities by possibly 4 percent this fiscal year and at least as much the next year. That could result in the loss of 2,500 faculty members, said Modesto A. Maidique, president of Florida International University.

A USF committee of faculty members is reviewing what programs the university can consolidate or cut, and they expect to report their findings as early as next week. In all, USF expects cuts of 15 percent, or about $52 million, from the $350 million it gets from the state.

USF May Bypass Agency To Build Own Hospital
02/15/2008 © Tampa Bay Online

TAMPA - The University of South Florida wants a teaching hospital on its Tampa campus, and a local lawmaker is trying to help get it.

Unable to get a state panel to approve a proposed hospital partnership in Pasco County, USF health leaders now are focusing on building a medical center of their own.
A bill filed for the upcoming legislative session would help them bypass the state agency that last year spurned the university's attempt to open, along with BayCare Health System, a teaching hospital in Pasco County.

The university and BayCare are appealing that decision by the state's Agency for Health Care Administration, which determines the need for a hospital.

Regardless of the outcome, however, USF leaders say they need to plan their own hospital to reach the level of excellence they aspire to.

"We've gotten to the point where we've got national recognition," said Stephen Klasko, USF's vice president of health sciences. "In order for Tampa and the university to go to the next step, we need a hospital that is 100 percent aligned with USF."

The bill bypassing state regulators was filed last month by state Sen. Dennis Jones, R-Seminole. It doesn't specifically mention USF, but the measure would exempt a state university with an accredited medical school from having to obtain a "certificate of need" from the Agency for Health Care Administration.

When asked why USF couldn't just seek approval from state regulators, Klasko said that it is unlikely every hospital would agree to USF's plan. That would make it harder to convince regulators that there's a need for a medical center at the university.

Although declining to answer questions about the proposal, Tampa General Hospital President and Chief Executive Ron Hytoff wrote in a statement, "This has created a new wrinkle in an already complicated situation that we are in the process of evaluating. Since USF is our strategic partner we do not want to rush to judgment. We are carefully assessing the details of this bill and maintaining a dialogue with the university."

Klasko said a campus teaching hospital would enhance its partnerships with area hospitals, particularly with Tampa General.

The university won't revoke residency slots from its partnering hospitals, Klasko said. Rather, USF can add and build residency programs in critical fields.

For instance, USF is rebuilding its orthopedic program after it collapsed in 1989, when 13 surgeons resigned after the school rejected their plan for an on-campus clinic. The university has hired a prominent San Diego surgeon to lead the
program's resurgence, and an accrediting agency last summer gave USF the go-ahead to begin training residents.

Klasko said he needs places to train them. Although partnerships with Tampa General and others hospitals are strong, he said, there are limits to the number of residents they can place there.

The hospital he's proposing on the northwestern part of campus, near the Florida Mental Health Institute, would have room for 200 beds. The university still will seek a partnership with BayCare to build a 130-bed teaching hospital in Pasco County. Last summer, state regulators turned down their proposal, noting it would take years for the proposed facility to qualify as a teaching hospital.

Whether USF has the money to build a hospital on its Tampa campus is another matter. The university is considering millions in budget cuts as state revenue continues to decline.

The university can issue bonds and seek help from donors, Klasko said. Once built, revenue is certain.

"There is no hospital in this town that isn't making a lot of money," he said.

**Audit: USF Financial Operation Has Flaws**
02/15/2008 © Lakeland Ledger

TAMPA | The University of South Florida last year had more than a dozen deficiencies and weaknesses in its financial operations, according to a just-released state audit that documents problems in areas such as travel reimbursements, cell phone use, the monitoring of vendors contracts, and the collection of student tuition.

The Florida auditor general, in an operational audit for the budget year that ended in June, found USF was not fully complying with rules for employee cell phone use, travel expenses, and employees' use of university purchasing cards.

The audit indicates USF officials have already addressed many of auditors' concerns, with a goal of resolving them by this summer.

According to the audit:
USF’s Florida Mental Health Institute maintains a $12,000 bank account meant to quickly pay research survey participants, but the account's custodian had excessive access to blank and signed checks.

USF has since tightened its controls to ensure supervisory oversight, chief financial officer Carl Carlucci told auditors earlier this month.

One employee used a USF purchase card to buy a $1,936 laptop, even though university rules ban laptop purchases over $999. Auditors also found eight purchases totaling $3,180 for items not allowed under USF rules.

Moreover, USF officials waited as long as 220 days after employees were terminated to cancel their purchase cards, leaving the university at further risk for unauthorized purchases.

Carlucci told auditors USF is revising its card policies, and is quickly canceling fired employees' cards.

As of April 2007, USF was paying for 167 employees' cell phone service, but did not review the monthly bills to check whether calls were made for personal or work use, as required by the federal government for tax purposes.

**USF professor warns of 'superbug'**

02/15/2008 © Bradenton Herald

MANATEE -- Protecting children from superbugs should be a top priority in Manatee County schools, says Dr. James McCluskey, of the University of South Florida.

"School systems are particularly dangerous," he said. "You are dealing with hundreds of little petri dishes that walk around in sneakers."

McCluskey briefed more than 60 teachers, nurses and parents Thursday on how to protect children and themselves against methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA - an antibiotic-resistant staph infection that spreads easily in locker rooms and public places.

"The most important thing you will learn today is what you learned in grade school - wash your hands," McCluskey said.

Although most MRSA carriers do not become infected, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates the virulent bacteria causes more than 96,000
infections each year and the number is growing. Local hospitals estimate the rate of infection has doubled since last year.

MRSA is everywhere, McCluskey said, because so much of our environment provides a perfect breeding ground. Control begins in the classroom, he said. He encouraged teachers to do a better job promoting hand-washing, especially before children eat their lunch and after they use the rest room.

Parents must be informed, said Kim Ryan, whose 10-year-old daughter, Hannah, a Buffalo Creek Elementary School student, nearly died from MRSA pneumonia a year and a half ago. Ryan, who attended Thursday's seminar, wants the school system to be more proactive.

"I would like to see a change in mentality," she said. "I am extremely ecstatic that they are trying to educate the public, but they need to involve more people - the media people, all of the teachers, the staff, the janitors."

Doctors still don't know how Hannah contracted MRSA, her mother said.

"She didn't have a scratch or a cut," Ryan said. "She was perfectly well one night, playing softball, and the next day she was in All Children's."

Ryan, now a volunteer at Buffalo Creek, is lobbying for the installation of hand sanitizers in all Manatee classrooms. And she wants teachers and school staff to make students use them several times a day.

"I spent more than two hours the other night cleaning Buffalo Creek's tech room, where all of the computers are. I washed it down from top to bottom and sanitized all of the equipment," she said. "We now have hand sanitizers at the door and the children have to use them when they enter and leave the room."

Until the 1980s, the most resistant form of MRSA was primarily found in hospital and nursing-home settings, among patients with catheters, infected surgical wounds or ulcerated bed sores, McCluskey said. Now there is another community strain of the bacterium that first shows up as boils or soft-tissue infections that become swollen, inflamed and painful.

McCluskey attributed the increased spread of MRSA to incorrect use of antibiotics and lack of effective infection control.

Manatee and Sarasota school officials have reported five cases of MRSA since the start of the school year.
Forrest Branscomb, risk manager for Manatee Schools, said the district wants to be proactive in educating both staff and the public.

McCluskey said stricter rules for athletes must be part of that plan.

"Athletes must be required to report all cuts and wounds to their coaches and under no circumstances should they be allowed to play," he said. "And that means no exceptions."

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**Florida 4th in nation on AP exam scores**
02/15/2008 © Ft. Myers News-Press

Florida had the fourth-highest pass rate in the nation on the rigorous Advanced Placement exams, the Florida Department of Education said today.

The AP exams are given for advanced high school courses in subjects such as English, math, science and social studies. Scores of 4 or 5 on the 5-point scale can give a student college-level course credits. The minimum passing score is 3.

According to a national report issued Wednesday by the College Board, more than one-fifth of Florida’s 2007 public high school graduates passed an AP exam.

Florida had the second-greatest increase in the total number of public school students passing an AP exam between 2006 and 2007 compared with all other states. In addition, Florida led all states in the number of African-American and Hispanic students passing AP exams, and Hispanic students are scoring about equally with their white counterparts, the state said.

“I applaud Florida’s high school students who have accepted the challenge of tackling the extra class work associated with Advanced Placement courses,” said Gov. Charlie Crist. “Congratulations also to the dedicated teachers who focus their efforts on guiding and preparing students for AP exams.”

Florida’s public school AP participation rate also outpaces the average national participation rate. Nearly 40 percent of Florida’s 2007 graduating class took at least one AP exam during high school.
“Research shows us that students who take AP courses are not only more likely to go to college, they are more likely to graduate on time as well,” said Education Commissioner Eric J. Smith. “As we work to increase our AP participation even further, we must encourage students to see themselves as college-bound and help them realize that the dream of college is firmly within their reach.”

“Florida is a national leader in increasing the number of public school students who are taking and succeeding on AP exams. Traditionally underrepresented students in Florida have been particularly successful,” College Board President Gaston Caperton said. “Change in education does not come overnight, and Florida’s achievements come from long-term support by the legislature and governors.”

In 2006, about one-third of AP students who went on to a Florida community college or university earned an average of 11 college credits before finishing high school. That credit translates into about four courses and an average cost savings of $745.80 for Florida public community college students and $1,228.48 for Florida public university students. Complete data comparing the graduating class of 2007 and entry into Florida colleges and universities is not yet available.

“The AP program provides a wonderful opportunity for students to challenge themselves and to gain a college-level education while still in high school,” Steven Pietrasiuk, a senior at Stanton College Preparatory School in Duval County, told the Department of Education. “AP courses have allowed me to earn approximately 30 credit hours towards my college education, providing me with a bright future and the promise of success.”

To learn more about Florida’s unique partnership with the College Board, log on to www.collegeboard.com/floridapartnership. For more information on Florida’s participation and performance on AP, visit www.fldoe.org/evaluation.

Illinois campus shooting makes South Florida students uneasy
02/15/2008 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel

When Northern Illinois University became the site of the latest campus tragedy Thursday, South Florida students felt the pain.

For Dennis Hollich, it brought back memories from April 16. Hollich, of Jupiter, is a sophomore at Virginia Tech, the site of the deadliest campus shooting in U.S. history.
"One of the worst things about the whole experience, other than the actual event itself, is having everyone turn their eye on your little corner of the world," said Hollich, 19. "The whole town was flooded with news stations."

The atmosphere after the Virginia Tech shooting was so distracting that Hollich left Blacksburg for a few days. It was difficult, he said, to keep hearing the tragedy replayed in news reports over the past 10 months. He expects that to intensify with this latest tragedy.

Josef Palermo, 23, of Delray Beach, felt less secure after hearing about the Northern Illinois shooting. A senior at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, he said students already are on edge following the December double murder at nearby Town Center mall and reports that a serial killer could be responsible.

"We're so open and so big, and there are always visitors on campus that aren't students. Anyone could bring anything to campus," he said. "I don't know how safe I feel."

Charles Brown, vice president for student affairs at FAU, said the university has made a number of safety improvements on campus in the past few years, including locks on classroom doors and improved alert systems. He said he believes FAU is a safe campus, but he added, "Any time something like this happens, we all feel uneasy."

Elana Sperling, 28, takes night classes at Broward Community College's Fort Lauderdale campus. She sees security walking the grounds constantly and escorting people to their cars at night. What concerns her most is what she sees happening to some young people.

"Kids are just waking up when they're 18 and saying, 'Let's go shoot someone,'" Sperling, of Fort Lauderdale, said. "There's a breakdown in the system ... underfunded schools, overworked teachers and uninvolved parents."

Since the Virginia Tech massacre — which left 32 students and gunman Seung-hui Cho dead — there have been high-profile campus shootings at Delaware State University, the University of Memphis and Louisiana State University.

"It just seems as though there's a trend, and that does heighten the concern and heighten the alarm for all students," said Bill King, police chief at Florida International University in Miami. "Students start questioning their own personal safety and surroundings. And parents have a lot of questions about the environment their children are in."
Local students react to deadly campus shooting

02/15/2008 © Tampa Bay News 9

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY (Bay News 9) -- Students at the University of South Florida (USF) expressed shock after hearing of yet another incident involving shootings on a college campus.

"I think college students should be able to have a safe environment," said student Arya Smith. "It's just terrible but when there comes to campus security there's only so much you can do."

Thursday, a gunman, who has been identified as 27-year-old former student Steven Kazmierczak, dressed in black stepped from behind a curtain at the front of a large lecture hall at Northern Illinois University and shot 21 people, six of them fatally, before shooting and killing himself.

Schools across the country beefed up security following the Virginia Tech massacre, including USF. A VT student opened fire April 16, 2007 in two separate attacks, killing 32 people and wounding many more before committing suicide. It was the deadliest school shooting in U.S. history.

Since then, Hillsborough County deputies and Tampa Police officers have been working with administrators to revamp campus safety policies.

USF hired private security guards and raised salaries for campus police in hopes of retaining more officers.

"We took police out of their previous department and also created a new department of public safety," said USF spokesman Ken Gullette. "So that it will all be under one umbrella and run more efficiently."

There's also a communications system in place to let students know about emergencies. Student explains technology.

USF hired a new public safety director as well. Bruce Bensen started in January. He said he's still working to overhaul the campus security system.
Boca Raton-based ADT offers mass notification security system
02/15/2008 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel

ADT Security Services announced Thursday it is offering a new electronic notification system targeted to schools, universities, municipalities and corporations that want to send emergency or routine alert messages to large groups quickly.

ADT Select Link is an easily programmable Web-based system that allows messages to be sent via e-mail, telephone, cell phone, pager, fax or wireless device. The service, devised by Boca Raton-based ADT, also includes translation so messages can be sent in any of 10 languages including Spanish, French, German, and Portuguese and two-way capability so temporary workers who are contacted can indicate if they are available to work.

The service cost varies depending on the number of recipients, but runs around $4 a recipient — educational institutions will pay slightly less — with unlimited messages.

The College Tour Goes Online
02/15/2008 © WWSB ABC Sarasota County

For those parents and students whose New Year's resolution is to start the search for the right college, some new - and free - tools are coming online to make that task a little bit easier.

The websites - College Portrait (http://www.voluntarysystem.org/) and U-CAN (http://www.ucan-network.org/) - offer essential information to make it easy to compare participating schools. Interested in the professor-student ratio? The racial breakdown on campus? A detailed picture of costs and financial aid? Here's where you can get a glimpse or follow the links to dig deeper.

These sites are one answer to the mounting pressure to make the often-frustrating system of admissions and financial aid easier for families to navigate. Some education advocates hope they will prove to be the first step toward building an even more comprehensive website that would include guidance-counseling components. Students should be empowered to choose for themselves what matters most, they say. And they hope these nonprofit alternatives will help reverse the brand-name frenzy fed by popular rankings such as the annual guide by U.S. News & World Report.
Just over a year ago, the report of the Education Secretary's Commission on the Future of Higher Education sounded the call for more accountability and transparency. College and university groups moved quickly to make the information they already gather more available to the public, aiming to head off potential federal mandates.

"Parents and students ... are trying to make some big, difficult decisions, so the more transparent we are about our business and the outcome of our business, the better it is for everyone," says Charles Reed, chancellor of the California State University system.

All 23 Cal State campuses will be represented on College Portrait, the joint venture of two public university associations, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). "It's important for all of higher education to participate so that we can continue to gain the public's confidence about how we use the public's resources to educate America's future workforce," Mr. Reed says.

College Portrait will offer some innovative features - such as an interactive cost calculator. People have a hard time figuring out the true cost of college, and low-income families often believe college is out of reach, says David Shulenburger, vice president for academic affairs at NASULGC. "We put the calculator in so that by entering a dozen pieces of data, you can [get] a reasonable estimate of what the net cost will be of attending a specific university."

Visitors to the site, which is still in its pilot stages, can see a breakdown of academic progress and graduation rates at each school - not only the percentage that graduate in four years and six years, but also the percentage that are still enrolled in higher education or have graduated from another institution.

Debate over access

Schools that want to be listed on College Portrait also have to agree to post "learning outcomes" data. Various assessments already exist to measure how much students gain in broad areas such as problem-solving and writing skills. But whether those results should be reported publicly is a matter of heated debate in higher education.

Because of the learning-outcomes requirement, the University of California, another public system in the state, has declined to participate.
Only about 300 out of more than 3,000 colleges and universities in the United States use such assessments so far, Mr. Shulenburger says. Schools that sign on to College Portrait will have the next four years to begin tracking the learning-outcomes results before being required to post them.

U-CAN - a site put together by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) - offers similar information in a template. It includes links to a school's own website for details on areas such as internships and study abroad. U-CAN does not require schools to post learning-outcomes data, but allows them to link to such information if they choose.

"Given the extraordinary diversity of our institutions ... what you need is a whole range of ways to assess quality," says NAICU president David Warren. A school whose curriculum is focused on the "Great Books" is going to measure success very differently from a school with strengths in engineering, for instance.

Launched in late September, U-CAN has nearly 600 colleges participating, and many others in the planning stage. College Portrait expects to have many schools represented by the spring.

For members of Congress who have been advocating for more accessible information, both sites are encouraging. A version of the College Opportunity and Affordability Act moving through the House would set up a voluntary system similar to U-CAN.

Focus on retention rates

Judy Bracken, a college and career specialist at George Mason High School in Falls Church, Va., says U-CAN is "really user-friendly; it's a fun, bright site." And she expects the cost calculator on College Portrait to be a popular feature. But she doesn't see the sites as unique.

"The College Board has [information] on almost every single college," she says. While she relies on a search tool that her school district pays for, she says various free resources are already available.

Wherever people do their searches, one piece of data she advises them to scrutinize is the retention rate - the number of first-year students who return the next year. "That really does tell you, Did they market themselves in a true fashion?"
Ms. Bracken encourages students to shake off the pressure to chase the Ivy League or other name-brand schools. "If I can just get kids to look really carefully at what is the best fit for them, then I feel like I've done my job."

Virtual counselors

There is an effort under way to incorporate some of the tried and true advice of guidance counselors into a free comprehensive website. The nonprofit group Education Conservancy (http://www.educationconservancy.org/) is leading the charge to develop a prototype and raise the estimated $400,000 it would need to start up such a site.

With so many students not having enough access to college counselors, there's a "dire" need for a site that will offer much more than just information templates, says executive director Lloyd Thacker, a former admissions officer and high school counselor. Thacker is also in the forefront of the movement to have colleges boycott the U.S. News rankings. "We're serving the needs of kids in a process that's become increasingly commercialized," he says.

**National Higher Education Issues**

7 dead in NIU shooting; 4 identified -- chicagotribune.com
02/15/2008 © The Chicago Tribune

*Update: A seventh person has died in the shooting, according to DeKalb County Coroner Dennis J. Miller. In addition, he released the identities of four of the victims: Daniel Parmenter, 20, of Westchester; Catalina Garcia, 20, of Cicero; Ryanne Mace, 19, of Carpentersville; and Julianna Gehant, 32, of Meridan.*

A gunman dressed in black stormed into an oceanography class at Northern Illinois University Thursday afternoon and opened fire with a shotgun and two handguns, killing five students and wounding 16 more in a matter of seconds.

Then, still on stage, he killed himself, authorities said.

The gunman was not a current student at the school of more than 25,000 that rises from cornfields and subdivisions 65 miles west of downtown Chicago, authorities said.

NIU President John G. Peters said the man had been enrolled as a sociology graduate student at NIU but left school last spring. Peters said the gunman had no police record.
Late Thursday, sources confirmed that they have tentatively identified the shooter as a 27-year-old graduate student in social work at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

A law-enforcement source said the man was found with a U. of I. identification card in his pocket, but the identification has not been confirmed.

Police also said they were unable to determine a motive for the shooting, which erupted shortly before 3 p.m., about 15 minutes before the class of about 100 students in Cole Hall was scheduled to end.

It was the worst campus shooting since April 16, 2007, when 32 people were shot to death on the campus of Virginia Tech University by a student who later killed himself.

Eyewitnesses described hearing a door to the right rear of the stage slam open and seeing the gunman, wearing a knit cap and sweat shirt, wielding a shotgun. He stayed within 10 feet of the door and started shooting—first with the shotgun and then with the handguns.

"He stood there for a second, looked and then just started shooting," said Meghan Murphy, 22, a junior from Western Springs, a student in the class. "His face was blank, like he wasn't a person. He was a statue, aiming."

Instructor Joseph Peterson, who was giving a PowerPoint presentation, ducked and was shot in the arm.

Junior John Giovanni, 20, of Des Plaines and others said the gunman aimed at the center of the auditorium.

"He just fires right into the audience," Giovanni said. "He didn't say a word. It didn't look like he was aiming directly at someone. I think he was trying to hit as many people as he could."

The blast was deafening, Giovanni said. Chaos erupted, with students dropping to the floor and crawling, running and shoving their way to the doors behind the rear seats, eyewitnesses said. Giovanni said he ran out of one of his shoes.

Half the class bolted for the doors; the rest cowered on the floor and attempted to hide under their seats or under desks, said Loren Weese, 18, a freshman from Schiller Park who was seated on the aisle about halfway up the auditorium.
"A lot of people fell," she said. "I don't know if they did that on purpose to avoid being shot. I remember stepping over them. I didn't talk to anybody."

One of those killed was Dan Parmenter, 20, a sophomore finance major from Elmhurst who worked at the school newspaper, the Northern Star. A graduate of York Community High School, Parmenter played rugby and was hoping to intern at the Chicago Board of Trade this summer. A couple of weeks ago, he persuaded fellow members of the Pi Kappa Alpha to donate time playing bingo.

He was sitting in the first row with his girlfriend when he was shot in the head. She also was shot.

NIU Police Chief Donald Grady said the department received a 911 call from inside the auditorium at 3:06 p.m. Police arrived 29 seconds later and found the gunman dead, Grady said. Students "were running through any door they could find to get out," he said.

After notifying the campus via the university Web site at 3:20 p.m. about a "possible gunman on campus," many students, teachers and staff were told to stay in place or "get to a safe area and take precautions until given the all clear."

Within minutes, the campus and DeKalb, a town of about 40,000, was a logjam of traffic—people trying to flee and others flocking to the scene.

Stuck in traffic as she neared DeKalb from her Park Ridge home, Carolyn DeSantis' anxiety about her son, Michael, a freshman, rose with each passing minute.

"I was just freaking out," DeSantis said. "I called him every five minutes to see if he was OK."

In the half-circle drive in front of Lincoln Hall, cars and mini-vans queued, and students filed out of the building with backpacks, duffel bags and laundry baskets.

As he waited for his daughter, Janae Morgan, 19, to come down to the mini-van from her dorm room, Darrin Robinson of Chicago pondered whether Thursday's shooting was related to the racist threats that were scrawled on a bathroom wall last fall.

"I just want them to take care of the problem," he said.

The shooting rattled students and locals alike.
"I think everyone is numb and kind of out of it. This just doesn't happen in DeKalb," said Rosa Balli, 47, owner of Eduardo's Mexican Restaurant.

Jillian Teegarden, 22, of St. Charles, a hostess at the restaurant, spent the afternoon calling friends to check on their well-being. She estimated she made 100 telephone calls.

"I'm just so scared to death that I'm going to hear someone's name that I haven't gotten a hold of," she said.

Others pondered how close they came to death.

Ethan Gill of Sun Prairie, Wis., was wandering the halls of Cole looking for an exam he was supposed to take. He had poked his head into the lecture hall where the shooting took place about five minutes before the gunman arrived. He left to check on the location for the exam and was about to re-enter the hall when he heard a shot ring out inside.

"What if I was off by another 30 seconds or so, would he have shot me?" Gill said.

The shooting, which occurred near the center of the NIU campus, took place 10 months after a student gunman at Virginia Tech killed 32 people and himself in the worst shooting rampage in modern U.S. history.

Armed with two handguns, the gunman killed two students in a dorm before storming a classroom building, chaining the doors behind him and shooting students and professors in German and engineering classrooms.

It was later revealed that the gunman had been referred to counseling after a professor became disturbed about his creative writing, and he was ordered to a psychiatric hospital because of concern he was suicidal.

On Dec. 10, NIU closed its campus after a racial slur and a reference to the Virginia Tech shootings were found written on a bathroom wall inside a residence hall. Administrators reopened the following day after authorities said the anonymous message no longer represented "an imminent threat to students, faculty or staff."

On Thursday, NIU President Peters dismissed any connection between the graffiti and Thursday's shooting. University administrators said the school imposed new safety measures after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and upgraded those measures after the Virginia Tech shooting.
The shooting was a grim reminder of the problem of keeping the traditionally open atmosphere of a college campus while protecting overall safety.

"Unless you lock every door, I don't know how you keep people out," Peters said. "I don't know if any plan can prevent this kind of tragedy."

On Thursday evening, about three dozen people attended a prayer service at Harvest Bible Chapel in DeKalb.

The non-denominational service focused on healing after the shootings.

"In our community and around the country, people are mourning and praying for us and for our campus," said Trevor Holloway, pastor of adult ministries, who led the service. "This is a very surreal experience. When we were watching it, unfold on TV, it's unreal. You almost can't believe it happened. You think, what if that would have been me?

"It causes all of us to think about how short life can be," said Holloway, urging the crowd to pray for the families of the victims.

Suzanne Mauhauer, a senior from Hoffman Estates, said she was in Gable Hall just after 3 p.m. when someone came into the class and whispered to the instructor.

"His face just went serious; he told everyone to grab our stuff and go into a room and he locked it," she said.

After locking himself in a room with the students, he told them what had happened. "People just broke down in tears," she said. "We couldn't believe what was going on. I kept repeating, 'Father, God.' People were crying around me.

"A lot of students are fearful to go back [to campus]. It's just not going to be the same."

Tribune reporters David Heinzmann, James Kimberly, Gerry Smith, Josh Noel, Deborah Horan, Megan Twohey, Mary Ann Fergus, Andrew L. Wang, Jo Napolitano, Jodi S. Cohen, James Janega, William Presecky, Richard Wronski and Ray Quintanilla contributed to this report. It was written by Tribune reporter Ted Gregory.

**Gunman kills five, injures 16 at school**
02/15/2008 © St. Petersburg Times
DEKALB, Ill. - With minutes left in a geology class at Northern Illinois University Thursday afternoon, a tall, skinny man dressed in black stepped out from behind a curtain on the stage of the lecture hall, said nothing, then opened fire with a shotgun, officials and witnesses said.

The man shot again and again, witnesses said, perhaps 20 times. Students in the large lecture hall, stunned, dropped to the floor.

Five people, all of them students, were killed, said university president John Peters. Sixteen others were injured, four of them critically.

The gunman, who had been a graduate student in sociology at the university last spring but was no longer enrolled, also died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, Peters said. Police said they knew of no motive.

 Authorities did not identify the gunman or the victims.

Several students in the class said the gunman appeared to fire first at the teacher, a graduate student who was wounded but was expected to recover.

Campus police said three weapons were found with the man's body - two handguns, including a Glock, and the shotgun. He had ammunition left over.

Lauren Carr, a 20-year-old sophomore, said she was sitting in the third row of the lecture hall when she saw the shooter walk through a door on the right-hand side of the stage, pointing a gun. She said she "Army-crawled halfway up the aisle. ... I said I could get up and run or I could die here."

A student in front of her was bleeding, "but he just kept running," she said. "I heard this girl scream, 'Run, he's reloading the gun.'"

Jerry Santoni was in the back row when he saw the gunman enter. "I saw him shoot one round at the teacher," he said. "After that, I proceeded to get down as fast as I could."

Another student, Desiree Smith, told a television station that the gunman aimed first at the instructor.

"This thing started and ended within a matter of seconds," said Donald Grady, university police chief. He said the gunman "may have been a student somewhere else."
The class in Cole Hall was an introductory offering, and most of the 162 students registered for the course were likely freshmen or sophomores, said Jonathan Berg, a department chairman.

Berg, who was about two blocks away in his office when the shooting began, ran over and found injured students sitting on sidewalks outside waiting for ambulances. Some had bandages on their heads, he said.

University officials put into action a detailed security plan created for such an incident, Peters said. Police officers arrived at the classroom within two minutes.

Many universities and colleges around the country designed elaborate lockdown and notification plans in the days and weeks after a student at Virginia Tech killed 32 people on the Blacksburg campus on April 16, the worst shooting rampage in modern American history.

"This is a tragedy," Peters said. "But from all indications we did everything we could when we found out."

The university was closed for one day during final exam week in December after campus police found threats, including racial slurs and references to the Virginia Tech shootings, scrawled on a bathroom wall in a dorm.

Police determined after an investigation that there was no imminent threat and the campus was reopened. Peters said he knew of no connection between that incident and Thursday’s attack.

Outside the dorms Thursday evening, it looked like the last day of school. Students streamed carrying backpacks and luggage. A caravan of parents made its way onto campus to meet them.

"You don't think it's going to happen at your university, and you certainly don't think it's going to happen in your department to people you know," Berg said. "You don't know how to react."

Information from the Associated Press and New York Times was used in this report.

**A rash of school shootings**

The shooting was the fourth at a U.S. school within a week.
- On Feb. 8, a woman shot two fellow students to death before committing suicide at Louisiana Technical College in Baton Rouge.

- In Memphis, a 17-year-old is accused of shooting and critically wounding a fellow student Monday during a high school gym class.

- The 15-year-old victim of a shooting Tuesday at an Oxnard, Calif., junior high school has been declared brain dead. 8A

**Northern Illinois**

Chartered in 1895, Northern Illinois University is a public university with more than 25,000 students, 91 percent of them from Illinois. DeKalb is about 65 miles west of Chicago.

**List: Campus Shootings Since 2000**

02/15/2008 © WOLF – Fox Orlando

Below is a list of shootings at American colleges and universities since 2000:

**Feb. 14, 2008:** A former graduate student at Northern Illinois University in Dekalb opens fire in a lecture hall, killing five students and wounding 16 others. He then commits suicide.

**Feb. 8, 2008:** Latina Williams, 23, opens fire during an emergency medical technology class at Louisiana Technical College in Baton Rouge, killing Karsheika Graves and Taneshia Butler. She then kills herself.

**Dec. 13, 2007:** Two Ph.D. students from India are found shot to death in a home invasion at an apartment on the campus of Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.

**Oct. 1, 2007:** University of Memphis football player Taylor Bradford, 21, who had been rumored to have won more than $3,000 at a casino, is fatally shot on campus in a botched robbery. Four men are later charged in the slaying, including one student.

**Sept. 21, 2007:** Two students are wounded at a late-night shooting at a campus dining hall at Delaware State University in Dover. Shalita K. Middleton, 17, dies Oct. 23 from her injuries. A student is charged in the shooting.
April 16, 2007: Cho Seung-Hui, 23, fatally shoots 32 people in a dorm and a classroom at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, then kills himself in the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

April 2, 2007: A 26-year-old researcher at the University of Washington in Seattle is shot to death in her office by her ex-boyfriend. Jonathan Rowan, 41, then kills himself.

Sept. 2, 2006: Douglas W. Pennington, 49, kills himself and his two sons, Logan P. Pennington, 26, and Benjamin M. Pennington, 24, during a visit to the campus of Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, W.Va.

May 9, 2003: A 62-year-old man with two handguns and a bulletproof vest fires hundreds of rounds during a seven-hour shooting spree and standoff at a Case Western Reserve University building in Cleveland. One student is killed and two others are wounded. Biswanath Halder, who authorities say was upset because he believed a student hacked into his Web site, is later sentenced to life in prison.

Oct. 28, 2002: Failing student and Gulf War veteran Robert Flores, 40, walks into an instructor's office at the University of Arizona Nursing College in Tucson and fatally shoots her. A few minutes later, armed with five guns, he enters one of his nursing classrooms and kills two more of his instructors before fatally shooting himself.

Jan. 16, 2002: Graduate student Peter Odighizuwa, 42, recently dismissed from Virginia's Appalachian School of Law in Grundy, returns to campus and kills the dean, a professor and a student before being tackled by students. The attack also wounds three female students. Odighizuwa is serving six life sentences after pleading guilty.

May 17, 2001: Donald Cowan, 55, fatally shoots assistant music professor James Holloway at a dorm at Pacific Lutheran University in Parkland, Wash., then turns the gun on himself. He leaves a 16-page suicide note expressing anger at a colleague of Holloway's whom he dated briefly as a teenager.

Aug. 28, 2000: James Easton Kelly, 36, a University of Arkansas graduate student recently dropped from a doctoral program after a decade of study and John Locke, 67, the English professor overseeing his coursework, are shot to death in an apparent murder-suicide by Kelly.

June 28, 2000: Medical resident Dr. Jian Chen kills his supervisor and then himself in his supervisor's office at the University of Washington in Seattle.
Faculty say Chen, 42, was upset he'd be forced to return to China because of his academic shortcomings

Source IDs alleged campus gunman who killed 6, himself  
02/15/2008 © CNN

DEKALB, Illinois (CNN) -- A law enforcement source familiar with the investigation into Thursday's shooting rampage at Northern Illinois University has identified the alleged gunman as Steven Kazmierczak.

The official declined to be named Friday citing the ongoing investigation.

Authorities have not publicly identified the gunman who opened fire on a geology class Thursday, shooting 21 people before turning the gun on himself. Six people were killed in addition to the shooter.

The DeKalb County coroner's office identified four of the victims, all Illinois residents: Daniel Parmenter, 20, of Westchester; Catalina Garcia, 20, of Cicero; Ryanne Mace, 19, of Carpentersville; and Julianna Gehant, 32, of Meriden.

University President John Peters said the gunman had a good record as an undergraduate and received a degree in sociology in 2006.

A preliminary investigation has not uncovered a police record on the gunman, and records showed he had no contact with university police while a student there, Peters said.

"There's no indication that there was any trouble," Peters as. Watch as the university president assess the situation »

The Chicago Tribune reported that the school honored the gunman two years ago for his research on the U.S. prison system, including a study of self-inflicted wounds among prisoners. He was a graduate student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Tribune reported.

President Bush on Friday morning asked Americans "to offer their blessings -- blessings of comfort and blessings of strength" to the community at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, about 65 miles west of downtown Chicago.

A spokesman for the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives said that some of its agents were on the scene to help police in the investigation. ATF agents could help trace the weapons used.
An FBI spokesman said bureau agents would assist as well.

All classes and events on the university campus were canceled until further notice. Dormitories remained open to house and feed students.

"I know what's happened, but I don't want to believe it," said Stefanie Miller, who saw two of her friends die in the Cole Hall shooting. Watch the shocked student ask for prayers »

Miller said the gunman came out from behind a curtain and opened fire, sending people screaming, running, and in many cases falling to the ground. It was like "a scene from a movie," she said.

The man used a shotgun and at least one handgun, witnesses said.

"A lot of people were screaming. Everybody started running for the door," said student Zach Seward. "It was just complete chaos."

Four died at the scene, including the shooter, and three later died at a hospital, officials said.

Police Chief Donald Grady said authorities do not yet know of a motive.

Late Thursday, dozens of students gathered on campus for a candlelight prayer vigil. Video footage showed students comforting one another and a young man playing guitar. Watch students gather and pray »

Seven counseling areas were set up, and hotlines were established.

Senior Daley Hamilton, 21, said most students were heading home to their parents. "My parking lot at my apartment is pretty sparse," she said.

She said she and her roommate were planning to leave Friday. "We are really on edge and just kind of want to get out," she said.

Tributes also were surfacing online. A Facebook community called "Pray for Northern Illinois University Students and Families" had more than 34,000 members by Friday morning.

Gunman 'just started shooting'

About 160 students were registered in the class that met in the large lecture hall.
Kevin McEnery said he was in the classroom when the gunman, dressed in a black shirt, dark pants and black hat, burst in carrying a shotgun. See photos of the scene »

"He just kicked the door open, just started shooting," McEnery said. "All I really heard was just people screaming, yelling 'get out.' ... Close to 30 shots were fired." Watch a student describe the chaos »

At 3:03 p.m. CT, university police responded, and four minutes later, the campus was ordered into "a lockdown situation," said Grady, the police chief.

At 3:20, an all-campus alert went out via the school Web site, e-mail, voice mail, the campus crisis hotline, the news media and alarm systems, he said.

"The message basically was: There's a gunman on campus, stay where you are; make yourself as safe as possible," he said.

Student Rosie Moroni said she was outside Cole Hall near the King Commons when she heard shots coming from the classroom.

The shots were followed by "a lot of people screaming," then people ran out the doors yelling, "He's got a gun, call 911," she recalled.

By 4 p.m., DeKalb police had swept the area "and determined there was only one gunman" and that he was dead.

Grady said the man used three guns: a shotgun, a Glock handgun and a small-caliber handgun, and was still on the stage when he turned one of the guns on himself. The small-caliber handgun had not yet been recovered, Grady said.

Security around campus was increased in December when police found threats scrawled on a campus bathroom wall that included racial slurs and references to last April's Virginia Tech shootings. Learn about other recent school shootings »

Peters said no evidence points to a link between the December incident and Thursday's shooting.

The university revised its emergency procedures after the Virginia Tech massacre, Peters said.
"I believe that paid off," he said. "That's really a sad thing to say, that you have to learn from an event like that, but we knew how we wanted to communicate and we sort of had some messages prearranged, and we got out there fairly quickly."

He said the shooting could force further changes.

"Universities for decades, for hundreds of years, have been open institutions -- the most open institutions," he said. "And events like this and Virginia Tech and others are forcing us to reconsider how we do things. I think that is unfortunate but necessary."

Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich declared a state of emergency, which will allow state agencies to assist local authorities.

Eighteen victims were taken to Kishwaukee Community Hospital in DeKalb, the hospital Web site said.

Of those, seven were in critical condition and were flown to other hospitals. One fatality, a male, was confirmed -- but was not the gunman, the hospital said. Two were admitted, and eight others were discharged. Watch how the victims were handled »

Nate Llewellyn, a spokesman for Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital in Downers Grove, said it had received two female patients and one male: Nineteen-year-old Unnum Rahman was in serious condition after receiving gunshot wounds to her right eye and arm; Maria Ruiz Santana was in critical condition; and an unidentified male was in critical condition. All three required surgery, he said.

The 113-year-old school has an enrollment of more than 25,000. The campus covers 755 acres.

**Gunman Kills 5 Students Before Shooting Himself in Illinois Campus Rampage - Chronicle.com**
02/15/2008 © The Chronicle of Higher Education

A gunman opened fire on a large lecture class at Northern Illinois University on Thursday, killing five people and wounding 16 before taking his own life.

The university's president, John G. Peters, described the incident as a "very brief, rapid-fire assault," and said the campus would be shut down until further notice.
He and other officials briefed reporters on the incident at two news conferences on Thursday evening.

According to their account, just after 3 p.m. on Thursday, the shooter, a former graduate student in sociology at the university, emerged from behind a curtain onto the stage of an auditorium in Cole Hall. Armed with a shotgun and two handguns, he stood where a graduate assistant was teaching "Introduction to Ocean Science" and began firing at students in the auditorium. About 160 students are enrolled in the course.

University officials did not release the gunman's name, but said he had been a student at Northern Illinois, which has about 25,000 students, in the spring of 2007 and was later enrolled at another public institution, which they did not identify.

In several news reports, witnesses described the shooter as a thin white man wearing a black trench coat. He had no police record, Northern Illinois officials said.

"At this time, we have no known motive," the university's police chief, Donald Grady, said at the first news conference on Thursday.

Mr. Grady said he did not know whether the incident was related to threats scrawled on a bathroom wall on the DeKalb, Ill., campus two months ago. Those comments, which included a racial slur against African-Americans, prompted the university to close on December 10, a date the graffiti mentioned.

"For me to tell you at this point that there is a connection or there is not would be premature," Mr. Grady said.

**Echoes of Other Tragedies**

The Northern Illinois incident occurred less than a week after a woman shot two classmates to death and then killed herself on the Baton Rouge campus of Louisiana Technical College, and it came nearly 10 months to the day after 33 people were shot dead at Virginia Tech, in the biggest mass shooting in modern American history.

The fatal victims of the Northern Illinois gunman were one male and four female students, Mr. Peters, the university president, confirmed on Thursday night. He did not identify the victims by name.
Others wounded in the shootings included the instructor who was teaching the class.

The local Kishwaukee Community Hospital reported on Thursday night that six victims were in critical condition and had been flown to other facilities, three had been admitted there, and eight had been discharged. (The numbers of victims reported by the hospital and the university did not match up on Thursday night.)

**A Lockdown and Alerts**

The shootings and the university's response were both rapid.

"This thing started and ended within a matter of seconds," said Mr. Grady, the police chief. Officers were on the scene within two minutes, at 3:03 p.m., and locked down the building by 3:07.

At 3:20 the university issued a campuswide alert on its Web site: "There has been a report of a possible gunman on campus. Get to a safe area and take precautions until given the all clear." It instructed students and employees to avoid the area of campus where the shooting had taken place.

In addition to that warning, the university also issued e-mail and voice-mail alerts, and activated its alarm system, a siren that ran for about 30 minutes, a staff member reported.

"The notifications went out, the plans worked as we had put them in place," said Eddie R. Williams, the university’s chief of operations and executive vice president for business and finance.

By 4 p.m. police officers had conducted a sweep of the campus and determined that the gunman, who killed himself on the auditorium stage, had acted alone."We determined that the immediate crisis was over at that point," Mr. Peters said.

At 4:10, another update appeared on the university's Web site: "Campus police report that the scene is secure," it said, telling nonessential employees to leave campus, students to report to any residence hall for counseling, and students and parents to call any of six crisis hot lines.

Between the first online alert and the all-clear, the university posted two other updates: one at 3:40 to announce that classes had been canceled through today, and another at 3:50 to confirm that there had been a shooting, with several victims taken away by ambulance.
Cell-Phone Networks Jammed

Despite assurances, people on the campus were shaken. Students and faculty and staff members scrambled to gather more details and call friends and family members. Cell-phone networks were overloaded, and some carriers brought extra equipment to the scene.

"People have been dumbstruck," said Jonathan H. Berg, chairman of the department of geology and environmental geosciences. "People don't know what to do."

Very quickly helicopters buzzed overhead, and reporters swarmed the campus, said Jim Killam, an adviser to the campus newspaper, the Northern Star. "We've been descended upon," he said.

On Thursday night, most students were still on the campus, said Mr. Killam. But he assumed many would leave, at least for the weekend. "A lot of parents are coming to pick up their kids," he said.

Many students were talking about December's threats, but no one saw an immediate connection to the shooting, Mr. Killam said. "It comes to mind," he said, "but nothing's really been verified."

The previous incident had stirred racial tensions on the campus and raised alarm. The bathroom graffiti told black students, for whom it used the N-word, to "go home," and it referred to the Virginia Tech shootings. "Die Sem Burr 10th ... Hmz Sdn Cr," the scrawls said, according to news reports.

The abbreviated message apparently referred to December 10 and the campus's Holmes Student Center. Northern Illinois informed all students and employees of the threats, began an investigation, increased security, and closed the campus on December 10.

A campuswide message from the president the following day said: "Today, we resumed operations under heightened security ... I ask your continued vigilance and cooperation."

But on Thursday night, Mr. Peters said he did not see a link between the threats and the shooting. "I do not know for sure that it was not connected," he said. But "it seemed spontaneous," he added. "We don't think there was any warning."
Difficulty of Protecting an Open Campus

On Thursday night, Mr. Peters responded calmly to questions about whether the university could have prevented the shootings.

"We've put in place so many security measures, and we are always reviewing our security," he said. But Northern Illinois, like most college campuses, is open, he said. "Unless you lock every door, I don't know how you really keep people out."

"I don't know if any plan can prevent this kind of tragedy," Mr. Peters said.

Many elected officials and universities issued statements of support and offers of assistance to Northern Illinois on Friday.

Charles W. Steger, president of Virginia Tech, sent special condolences. "Our university community was bolstered and comforted by the outpouring of support from campuses around the nation and the world" last year, he said in a written statement.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, agents of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, and state, local, and campus police officials are examining the crime scene at Northern Illinois, Mr. Peters said.

The university is posting frequent updates about the shootings on its Web site and will continue to do so as often as there is new information, he said.

"Our thoughts and our prayers and our hearts go out to the families" of the victims, Mr. Peters said. "We're doing all we can right now" to reach out to them, he said.

Student Lenders Scale Back, but Not All Agree They Face Crisis - Chronicle.com
02/15/2008 © The Chronicle of Higher Education

With each passing day, the student-loan industry issues new warnings about the twin dangers of federal subsidy cuts and turmoil in the credit markets stemming from the crisis in subprime mortgage lending.

"It feels to me we are headed to a real crisis in the student-loan world," Richard Shipman, director of financial aid at Michigan State University, told The Detroit
News this week after the state's student-loan authority canceled a program for offering private student loans (The Chronicle, February 13).

Industry officials have repeatedly cited such cutbacks in both private and federally subsidized lending as evidence that Congress went too far last year in cutting the subsidies on government-backed loans at a time of overall economic peril.

The College Loan Corporation has said it will stop offering federally subsidized loans, Nelnet Inc. has said it will not write any new consolidation loans, and Sallie Mae, the nation's largest student-loan company, has said it will be more restrictive in all categories (The Chronicle, January 24).

Several lenders also reported in recent days that they were unable to continue financing their student loans through asset-backed securities, as the mortgage crisis had left investors less willing or able to afford packaged student debt.

Yet one of the nation's largest student lenders, JP Morgan Chase & Company, doesn't seem to have gotten the memo.

The bank's student-loan division, Chase Education Finance, has announced plans to cut borrower rates, including eliminating the origination fee on all federally guaranteed student loans.

**A Different Strategy**

Chase also said in its announcement that it will eliminate origination fees on its private loans, meaning those that carry no federal subsidy, while offering interest rates "as low as 1 percentage point below prime."

Most college students rely on loans, and "reducing fees and interest rates for qualified applicants will make it easier for them," Danny C. Ray, president of Chase Education Finance, said in the statement.

Chase's position stands in sharp contrast with the warnings that others in the industry have been issuing since Congress voted last September to increase student aid by some $20-billion and finance it by cutting the subsidies paid to lenders in the government-backed guaranteed-student-loan program, known as the Federal Family Education Loan Program, or FFEL (The Chronicle, September 10, 2007).

Chase and other large banks can afford to buck the industry trend, said a company spokesman, Thomas A. Kelly, because they have their own substantial
assets and don't need to rely on securities or other forms of outside investment to finance their student lending.

"We've been putting the loans on our own balance sheet," Mr. Kelly said in an interview, "and so we don't need to go to the secondary market if we don't want to or if the market's not good."

Rather than leave the student-loan market, Chase has been increasing its investment in it, through actions such as purchasing Collegiate Funding Services, a company that originates and services student loans, and hiring workers laid off by Nelnet.

"We have made a strategic decision," Mr. Kelly said, "and continue to believe that the student-lending business is a good business."

That, however, isn't stopping the student-loan industry from warning colleges and their students of the dangers they still may face.

**Full Effect Unknown**

Not enough is known about the levels of service that would be provided by Chase and other large banks "to know what the impact would be on borrowers" who can't use lenders that have scaled back, like College Loan Corporation, Nelnet, or Sallie Mae, said Kevin Bruns, executive director of America's Student Loan Providers, an industry lobby group.

"Viewing it from Mars, yeah, I would agree that it probably doesn't make much difference to students," Mr. Bruns said. "But that's just conjecture and irrelevant. What matters is what happens at the consumer level. It actually may matter a great deal to individual consumers."

Some industry leaders have warned that colleges may find too few lenders to offer government-subsidized loans, and may be forced to use the smaller direct-loan program, in which students borrow directly from the Education Department.

Harris N. Miller, president of the Career College Association, which represents for-profit colleges, has said his members fear that the direct-loan program might not be able to handle a sudden surge in demand.

But a spokesman for the association, Luke Thomas, said the group had no data to support that "conjecture." The association's fear, he said, is based on comments from member colleges that tried the direct-loan system during the 1990s "and
were extremely frustrated and left, because of what they considered maladministration."

Education Secretary Margaret Spellings has repeatedly said she has seen no solid evidence that the subsidy cutbacks or the mortgage-lending crisis threatens to harm student borrowers.

A department spokeswoman, Samara Yudof, expressed confidence that the direct-loan program could handle any increase in demand, though she did acknowledge some concern about the overall effects from a reduction in private lenders.

The competition between the bank-based FFEL program and the direct-loan program "has resulted in innovations, higher quality services for students and families, and lower costs for students and taxpayers alike," Ms. Yudof said.

While the direct-loan program "could accommodate additional schools and the students and families they serve," she said, "the department is concerned the benefits of the FFEL program could diminish as a result of fewer lender participants."

**NSF Should Require Cost Sharing for Some Research Centers, Report Says**

02/15/2008 © The Chronicle of Higher Education

The National Science Foundation should resume requiring universities to ante up their own cash, including donations they secure from industry, as a condition for receiving certain kinds of industry-oriented research centers, the National Science Board recommends in a [new report](https://www.chronicle.com/article/NSF-Should-Require-Cost-Sharing/68302). The recommendation is part of a continuing review this year by the science board, which sets policy for the NSF, about this financial practice, known as cost sharing. In 2004 the NSF ended a policy of requiring grant applicants to kick in a chunk of the direct cost of some research projects. That change did not reverse a statutorily required match of 1 percent, and NSF grants continue to include a component for overhead or "indirect" costs, like administration and buildings ([The Chronicle](https://www.chronicle.com/article/NSF-Should-Require-Cost-Sharing/68302), October 15, 2004).

Cost sharing had stretched limited research dollars, but NSF officials became worried about the practice. The practice was seen as favoring grant proposals based on a criterion other than their scientific excellence.
The new document, "Report to Congress on Cost Sharing Policies at the National Science Foundation," says that the NSF should make some exceptions and require cost sharing for some types of research programs in which industry and academe had collaborated before the policy change in 2004. Those include the science foundation's Engineering Research Centers and Industry/University Cooperative Research Centers, as well as the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, or EpScor. Before the policy change, colleges were expected to put up 10 percent to 50 percent of the cost of those projects.

Colleges had used the old policy as leverage to encourage corporations to pony up money toward the expected cost share, and without that "skin in the game," corporations didn't commit themselves seriously to the joint projects, said Kelvin K. Droegemeier, a member of the science board who led a panel that wrote the report. He is a professor of meteorology at the University of Oklahoma at Norman and a deputy director of an Engineering Research Center.

"We didn't see any dramatic evidence of major damage" to industry-oriented, university research centers since the 2004 policy change, he said in an interview, but research-center officials were nevertheless worried that it was a disincentive to industry participation.

The science board plans to conduct a Web-based survey this year to explore other effects of the 2004 policy change.

Wearable Tracking Tags Test Privacy Boundaries at the U. of Washington - Chronicle.com
02/15/2008 © The Chronicle of Higher Education

It's 2 a.m. Do you know where Evan Welbourne is?

If the University of Washington graduate student is burning the midnight oil at the computer-science building on the campus here, finding him is as easy as logging on to a Web page. Whether he is walking down the hallway or lingering outside a professor's office, an invisible monitoring network tracks his location and reports back to a database.

Mr. Welbourne doesn't mind. He has agreed to take part in a university experiment designed to explore the myriad new and serious privacy concerns raised by tiny tags called radio-frequency identification, or RFID, tracking devices.
While RFID isn't a household word, the technology behind it has long been a part of the lives of just about every American.

The devices — chips with radio antennas — emit signals, and tracking them reveals the movement of people or things. Many stores use the technology to catch shoplifters at exits.

Now, because the tags can emit individual codes, companies are using them to track specific inventory items, credit cards, and ID badges. Conceivably, sensors could follow people throughout their daily lives.

But who should track whom? Where, when, and how? And what effect will this constant shadowing have on the trackers and the trackees?

To get answers, the University of Washington developed the RFID Ecosystem. It is an attempt to "create a future world where RFID's are everywhere," says Gaetano Borriello, a professor of computer science. At the moment, 140 antennas that pick up signals and 35 RFID readers that interpret data are monitoring five of the six floors in the university's Paul G. Allen Center for Computer Science and Engineering.

Many of the devices have been placed in conduits above hallways, making them virtually unnoticeable to anyone who isn't looking for them. An additional 16 readers and 32 antennas, which will cover the building's entrances, are on the way.

The project will grow to allow 100 to 150 computer-science students and faculty and staff members to track people — and allow people to track them — on the project's Web site. Mr. Welbourne, who plans to write a thesis about the project, eagerly signed up to have his privacy invaded.

The plan is to study the choices that participants make: How often will they track their own activities or those of others? If some selective blocking is allowed, will they allow certain people to see their comings and goings but not others? What information will they want to know?

Some information revealed by the RFID project can be trivial. "I occasionally check how often I've had coffee or when and with whom a particular meeting occurred, but usually only out of curiosity," Mr. Welbourne says.

But the project's managers are developing software that may add value to tracking. For example, Mr. Welbourne says, a program might be able to answer a question like this: "What Web sites did I visit and what files did I edit during the last database-group meeting when both Dan and Magda were in attendance?"
There are some privacy protections built into the experiment. Restrooms, elevators, and a giant atrium — all part of one large space — are off limits to monitoring in order to let people do some things, like answer calls of nature, privately.

Some aspects of protection are actually part of the experiment. Participants will be able to control who can see information about their movements and even instantly leave the network. The idea, Mr. Welbourne says, is to figure out whether people will tend to opt in or opt out: "Do users feel that the utility of an application justifies the potential loss of privacy?"

**Reality vs. Hype**

At least one other university has experimented with tracking technology. About six years ago, researchers at the University of California at San Diego created a system that allowed students to track one another's locations through Wi-Fi-enabled personal digital assistants.

Some students chose not to be tracked, says William G. Griswold, a computer-science professor at San Diego, while others expanded the level of access to their whereabouts. "We have many stories about how it created positive, serendipitous interactions" by allowing people to find one another on the campus, he says.

Lack of money killed off the project, but the same researchers are exploring other ways in which people react to machines that spot individual movements. One way is to change the messages on large public displays depending on who's walking by, and see what people do. Cellphones carried by students will alert the displays to their presence.

In Seattle the RFID project's early findings are that "technology itself is not an inherent risk to privacy, or at least not in any way that can't eventually be fixed," Mr. Welbourne says. For example, he says, an RFID tag could be designed to provide location information only to detection devices that use a specific password, making it impossible for strangers to surreptitiously track it.

But as with any technology, there are glitches and blind spots. The RFID antennas can "see" through some barriers, like a textbook, but not through others, like a human body.

Other potential problems include conflicting signals from multiple tags or the lack of communication between RFID sensors.
"A lot of this is about trying to separate reality from hype, and find what will actually work and what won't," says Jennifer King, a researcher who studies technology and privacy at the University of California at Berkeley School of Law. "RFID isn't as simple as everybody thinks it is."

In fact, it can make human relationships even more complex. "We discovered that even when someone grants another person the right to track them, they may be disappointed if that other person doesn't ask the system about their whereabouts," Mr. Welbourne says. They end up "feeling shunned in some way."

In other words, even if the computer knows where you are, there's no guarantee that anyone will care.
Some Anthropologists Continue the Slow Push Toward Open Access - Chronicle.com
When the American Anthropological Association announced in September that it would move its publishing apparatus from the University of California Press to Wiley-Blackwell, anthropology blogs and e-mail lists buzzed with discontent. Some advocates of open-access publishing complained that moving to a for-profit publisher seemed like a step backward. And the switch would almost certainly mean higher prices for libraries, they said, which might spark a decline in subscriptions.

"What good is the AAA to its members if its primary goal is survival, rather than the promotion and dissemination of our research?" asked Christopher M. Kelty, an assistant professor of anthropology at Rice University, on the group blog Savage Minds, when the deal was announced.

In 2008 most of the association's 22 journals have seen only slight price increases. Two of its most prominent publications, however, have become much more expensive. In 2006-7 the California Press charged $232 to institutions for American Anthropologist. Wiley-Blackwell's price is $432. And while California charged $138 for American Ethnologist, Wiley-Blackwell's price spiked to $338. "I have to wonder how relevant these journals will be when libraries start dropping the sectional journals to make up the cost of the flagships," wrote John Hawks, an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, on his blog in November.

Notwithstanding the price hikes, passions seem to have cooled. Even some of the deal's skeptics have conceded that Wiley-Blackwell seems well equipped to develop and promote AnthroSource, a digital repository and research portal that the association created in 2004 with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The hope is that AnthroSource will someday contain a wide range of audio and video as well as archival texts. And the Wiley-Blackwell arrangement also promises to strengthen the association's finances: The contract guarantees the association a minimum of $2.7-million in revenue over a five-year period.

Symposium on Open Access

In a notably civil exchange in the February issue of Anthropology News, the association's internal newsletter, five scholars debate the merits of open access. All agree that the association should use the next five years to sit back and think about the future of its publishing mission, so that it will be prepared to renegotiate with—or abandon—Wiley-Blackwell in 2013.
"We have a five-year window," says Jason Cross, a graduate student at Duke University who organized the Anthropology News symposium. "But the window for thinking creatively is likely shorter than that."

Mr. Cross would like to see the association move toward a fully open-access model in which scholars (or the institutions that employ them) subsidize the cost of their own publications. But he acknowledges that his proposal raises a host of thorny questions. "Bloggers and open-access advocates like me have a loud voice in certain forums," he says. "But we're not representative. A lot of triple-A members have never heard of this stuff. There are a lot of constituencies within the organization that would need to think carefully and slowly about these things."

In 2006 the anthropology association created a new panel, the Committee on the Future of Print and Electronic Publishing, which will (among other tasks) advise the association about the potential strengths and drawbacks of open-access models. Meanwhile, some anthropologists are charging ahead with their own open-access projects. Alex Golub, an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, has organized an online repository called the Mana'o Project, which invites scholars to submit theses, articles, and book-length manuscripts. The site is still in development, but it already contains works by more than 120 authors.

**Effect on Peer Review**

One long-standing concern about open access is that it would dilute peer review. In the Anthropology News symposium, Donald Brenneis, a professor of anthropology at the University of California at Santa Cruz and a former president of the association, warns that if tenure-and-promotion committees become confused about the nature and quality of peer review in open-access journals, they will turn instead to metrics like citation counts and "impact factors." Those quantitative metrics, Mr. Brenneis says, are ill suited for measuring the value of anthropological scholarship.

Mr. Cross disagrees. "There's no reason whatsoever for any journal to change its peer-review system in an open-access model," he says.

Mr. Kelty, of Rice, writes in the symposium that for the first time in his career, he feels some resentment when he is asked to peer-review articles. Wiley-Blackwell has "an enormous profit margin," he writes, and he wonders whether the association is receiving fair compensation for the unpaid peer-review labor that he and hundreds of other scholars provide.
The most provocative essay in the Anthropology News symposium comes from Melissa Cefkin, an anthropologist who works as a research scientist at IBM. During the past 20 years, her employer has shifted its emphasis from selling products to selling services like software support. The anthropological association, Ms. Cefkin suggests, should make the same kind of shift. Alongside a transition to open-access publishing, she writes, the association should more broadly consider what its members buy when they pay dues. Instead of purchasing a few journal subscriptions as a "product," she suggests, members should view their dues as supporting a wide range of activities that support the dissemination of scholarship.

Both Mr. Cross and Ms. Cefkin say they are hopeful the association will carefully consider open-access models during the next two years. In the near term, the association has another question to wrestle with: how to divide the revenue from the Wiley-Blackwell publishing deal among its sections. A pair of committees presented a set of possible formulas to the sections last month.

"There has been a lot of analysis of the potential implications of these models for the various sections," Ms. Cefkin says. "But that said, many of the sections seem to be not only looking out for themselves, but also thinking of others. One of the values that we're trying to uphold is a sense of diversity, so that whatever we come up with doesn't become unduly harsh for the smaller sections."

**Approach to Comments**

Meanwhile, the Anthropology News symposium has itself given rise to a new round of angst. In a post at Savage Minds on Thursday, Mr. Kelty wrote that he and Mr. Cross tried and failed to persuade the association's staff to publicly release the articles under a Creative Commons license and to allow readers to comment paragraph by paragraph, using the Institute for the Future of the Book's CommentPress software or something similar. Instead, the articles were published online with little fanfare and had drawn only three comments as of Thursday afternoon.

"This is not only a failure of open access," Mr. Kelty wrote. "It's a profound failure of leadership and a failure to create dialogue."

Mr. Cross said on Thursday that he, too, is disappointed that the association did not create a more-elaborate mechanism for readers to comment on the symposium. But he added that he is pleased that the association has promised to make the symposium permanently available to the public online. (Most material in Anthropology News goes into an archive that is open only to the association's members.)
A spokesman for the association said on Thursday that it is experimenting with new ways of encouraging dialogue among its members. "A lot of hard work has gone into trying to make this process as transparent as possible," said Damon Dozier, the association's director of public affairs. Mr. Dozier noted that the association has introduced three new blogs in recent months, and he emphasized that readers can comment online on the Anthropology News symposium, even if the commenting system isn't as sophisticated as Mr. Kelty and Mr. Cross might have liked.

**Few Colleges Follow Ivies with Aid to Middle Class**
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Well-endowed colleges have discovered they love the middle class.

Following recent announcements by Ivy League heavyweights Harvard and Yale that they were cutting costs for families earning in the low six figures, a growing number of competitors have fallen in line to offer comparable packages to middle-class families.

On Jan. 31, Cornell became the fifth Ivy League school to announce a new financial aid initiative for students, closely following on the heels of Dartmouth and the University of Pennsylvania. Even schools outside the Ivy League, such as Northwestern University, are following suit. On the same day that Cornell weighed in, Northwestern announced plans to eliminate student loans and replace them with grants for undergraduate students with the greatest financial need.

These institutions say the moves are designed to make it easier for middle-class and upper-middle-class families to pay for college. For example, Harvard University describes the news as a "sweeping middle-income initiative" on its Web site, while other schools made similar pronouncements. But despite this big talk, real help for the middle class, at least for the majority of families with students at colleges with fewer financial resources than the Ivies and other elites, will not be coming any time soon.

"It's basically a very few privileged people who will be helped by this initiative," says Sandy Baum, senior policy analyst for the College Board and a professor of economics at Skidmore College. "There aren't many colleges that can remotely afford to do this."

Affordable for the Richest Colleges
The move to increase endowment spending by top schools comes amid political pressure to do something to cushion the high cost of college education. On Jan. 24, Senators Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) and Max Baucus (D-Mont.) asked the nation's 136 wealthiest colleges and universities for detailed information on their endowments, tuition hikes, and financial aid. Their requests came shortly after the National Association of College & Business Officers released a report that a record 76 schools had endowments topping $1 billion or more in the last fiscal year. As tuition continues to outpace inflation at the nation's colleges (BusinessWeek.com, 10/22/07), the pressure is on for schools to distribute more of their wealth among students.

"I think the discussion in Washington reflects what Congress hears from students and parents. Yale hears from students and parents as well," Tom Conroy, a spokesperson for Yale University, wrote in an e-mail. "Both Congress and the school are reacting to the same voices."

But while the tuition aid by the big schools is welcomed by students and their families, comparable largesse is not a feasible option for most of the nation's schools, which have endowments significantly below Harvard's $34.6 billion. For the foreseeable future, it appears just a small percentage of the nation's 18 million college students attending elite universities-less than 1%-will be affected by the financial aid decisions at some of the nation's top schools. The reason? Most higher-education institutions, including small private colleges and state universities, simply can't compete with the vast financial resources of the Ivies and their peers. The majority don't have endowments anywhere near the size they would need to offset the cost of tuition for middle- and upper-middle-class students, experts say.

In fact, pressure at less-wealthy state schools to compete for top students could have the perverse effect of hurting those students most in need. In the worst-case scenario, schools could choose to divert money from low-income students in favor of more financial aid for middle-class and affluent students, says Richard Vedder, director of the Washington (D.C.)-based Center for College Affordability & Productivity. "In that sense, low-income students are a little bit at risk," Vedder says.

Pressure on All Schools

Under Harvard's plan, families earning between $60,000 and $120,000 will pay a small percentage of their annual income for tuition, room, and board, jumping to 10% for those earning between $120,000 and $180,000. At Yale, families with incomes below $120,000 will see their financial contribution slashed by more
than 50%, while most families with incomes between $120,000 and $200,000 will see their costs drop by 33% or more.

But very few of the nation's private colleges and universities can follow this example, says Tony Pals, a spokesperson for the National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities (NAICU). Of his organization's 1,600 member schools, only 40 have an endowment of $1 billion or more. The remaining 1,560 schools have a median endowment of $14 million, he says, and only three of those schools have announced plans to replace loans with grants. "That tells you right there and then what the disparity looks like between the haves and the so-called have-nots," Pals says.

That doesn't mean that presidents of private colleges and universities haven't been following the financial-aid news with keen interest, wondering what it will mean for them down the road. Jackie Jenkins-Scott, president of Wheelock College in Boston, says it's nearly impossible for a small liberal arts college like hers-with an endowment of $50 million-to offer students financial-aid packages comparable to those announced in recent weeks. However, she plans to raise the issue of how to best allocate the school's limited financial-aid resources among low- and middle-income students at the school's next trustee board meeting in March.

"[W]hen parents pick up the newspaper and see these things happening, it raises the expectation of what all institutions will make available," Jenkins-Scott says. "And many of us don't have the resources to make that available, which is one way we get a lot of pressure."

Feds May Have to Intervene

Even presidents at private schools with endowments above $200 million, such as Ithaca College, which shares its hometown with Cornell, say they can't match the heavyweights. Ithaca President Peggy Williams says she could replace student loans with subsidized grants if she was able to get an additional $24 million in earnings from the school's $237 million endowment. But to do that, she would have to raise an additional $500 million in endowment funds from alumni and donors, a nearly impossible feat, she says.

"The impact on us will be people saying, 'Why do I have to take out a loan at your school when other schools are giving grants?'" Williams. "We'll have to explain why to them. I think they'll look around and realize that it is less than 1% of the institutions in the country that are able to do any of these big headline strategies."
Ultimately, the federal government will need to step in and help address the inequities between the schools with large endowments and smaller ones, says Richard Kahlenberg, a senior fellow at the Century Foundation, a nonpartisan public policy group based in Washington and New York. The number of schools capable of following Harvard's lead will likely trail off in the coming months, but that does not mean demand for lower tuition at colleges across the country will fade, he says.

"Part of the reason that the Senate held hearings about the endowments is that they hope that even if legislation doesn't pass, it spurs some voluntary action," Kahlenberg says. "I think we've seen some evidence that this worked in this case."

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