Florida Senate leader pushes for voters to determine who sets college-tuition rates

02/20/2008 © Orlando Sentinel

Senate President Ken Pruitt wants voters to settle the fight between lawmakers and the state university system's governing board over who sets tuition rates for public colleges and universities.

Pruitt, R-Port St. Lucie, said Tuesday that Senate leaders will push a constitutional amendment this session spelling out that the Legislature -- not the Board of Governors -- has the sole power to set tuition. The amendment would also make the state's education commissioner elected once again.

Pruitt said the measure -- which would go to voters in November -- will articulate a "clearly defined role" for the board, which voters created in 2003 to oversee the mission of higher education in Florida.

The Legislature is being sued by the board and by supporters such as former U.S. Sen. Bob Graham and retired U.S. Rep Lou Frey, who say the 2003 amendment gave the board tuition-setting authority.

"Instead of having me involved in a lawsuit here because they're being compelled to sue us, we decided we're going to define the roles about what they do and what we do," Pruitt told reporters Tuesday.

He said he wanted to spell out more clearly that the Board of Governors should oversee long-term policy: "They need to be at the 40,000-foot level so that they can truly plan for the future in terms of what Florida's university system needs to look like," Pruitt said.
"I don't think their role is to determine what bachelor's program that FSU should be doing."

Graham led the campaign to put the constitutional amendment creating the Board of Governors on the ballot after the 2000 Legislature abolished the Board of Regents. The BOR had infuriated then-House Speaker John Thrasher by opposing a new medical school for Florida State University, Thrasher's alma mater.

Since then, lawmakers have resisted the board's increasing insistence that it has the authority to increase tuition to help pay for growing enrollment, voting in January to seek an 8 percent hike that would cost the average college student $200. Pruitt has fought to hold down any tuition hikes.

Reacting to Pruitt's proposal, both sides acknowledged that the status quo isn't working.

"A court of law is not a place for us to decide who governs whom," said House education Chairman Joe Pickens, R-Palatka.

On the other side, Frey conceded that having lawmakers and the board jockeying to control tuition was "intolerable. . . . You just can't have two groups claiming to be in charge of such an important thing."

Board of Governors chairwoman Carolyn Roberts stopped short of criticizing the proposal.

"I have to be cautious about what I say because of the lawsuit," she said. "I'm hopeful President Pruitt agrees with me that all of us ultimately want a university system that is strong and competitive."

On the education commissioner front, Pruitt said returning to an elected commissioner would restore accountability to the position, which has been appointed by the governor since voters reorganized the Florida Cabinet in 1998.

"You're going to have an elected official that is accountable to the people, and that will best determine if people think our education system is going in the right direction," Pruitt said.
Tallahassee - A decade after Florida voters did away with an elected education commissioner, Senate President Ken Pruitt wants voters once again to pick the state's top educator.

And he wants voters to designate the Legislature to control tuition at state universities, a move aimed at settling a legal battle with the Board of Governors.

The Port St. Lucie Republican is proposing a single state constitutional amendment for the November ballot to accomplish both changes.

There's no specific wording available yet, but key senators as well as House leadership said they'll support the ideas.

"I think there needs to be clarity on the governance issue and tuition, and if the Senate president wants the resolution to include an elected commissioner, I would respect him on that," said Rep. Joe Pickens, R-Palatka, House education chief. He said House Speaker Marco Rubio supported the idea when they chatted on Tuesday.

Three-fifths of both chambers will have to approve the measure for it to be on the ballot. The governor's approval is not required.

In 1998, voters amended the state Constitution to reorganize the state Cabinet effective 2002 and to change the way state education policy is set. The amendment created an appointed Board of Education with seven members and staggered four-year terms. The governor appoints the members, who in turn appoint the commissioner.

T. Willard Fair, chairman of the Florida Board of Education, said that the current system works because the education commissioner doesn't have to worry about voter backlash when taking up controversial measures, like Tuesday's vote in favor of new science standards that embrace evolution.

"You have to make tough decisions: Is this one worth my not getting re-elected, or is this one worth it," Fair said. "When you are free of those considerations, you can focus unselfishly on what you think is best."

Yet opponents say the current setup gives the governor too much power. They also think an education commissioner should be accountable to voters.

"I don't think education should be partisan," said Sen. Jeremy Ring, D-Margate. "It tends to be partisan when it's chosen by a partisan governor representing one party or the other."
Democrat Sen. Frederica Wilson, D-Miami, has pushed for an elected commissioner for several years and last year the Senate passed her measure overwhelmingly. The proposal hadn't gotten much traction in the House until this past week.

While there's bipartisan support for electing an education commissioner, there's less certainty about the proposed amendment's impact on the state university system, given that Senate leaders were short on details.

The Senate's intent was obvious to state university system officials: show the Legislature's muscle. Moreover, the constitutional amendment could provide lawmakers with a victory at the polls should they lose their tuition-setting battle in court.

"With all due respect, I am working under a constitutional amendment voted overwhelmingly, by more than 60 percent of the citizens of this state, and that is what I am trying to do," said Board of Governors chairwoman Carolyn Roberts. "I will await the final outcome of the court case."

Voters created the current Board of Governors in 2002 to oversee Florida's 11 public universities. From the start, the board has been an uncertain political animal, coming after Gov. Jeb Bush and the Legislature dissolved the longtime university system Board of Regents, following a political disputes over issues like a new FSU medical school.

Over the past six years, the board has tried to both exert its authority and get along with lawmakers who believe they have the sole right to set tuition.

**Pruitt wants voters to choose education commissioner again**

02/20/2008 © Palm Beach Post

TALLAHASSEE — Senate President Ken Pruitt said Tuesday that he plans to push for a constitutional amendment that would return the state education commissioner to an elected position.

Voters eliminated the position from the Florida Cabinet in 1998 as part of a Cabinet reorganization. The commissioner is now appointed by the governor.
Pruitt and House leaders are backing the proposal, which would go before voters on the November ballot if passed by two-thirds of both the House and the Senate.

Pruitt said: "Accountability. You're going to have an elected official who is accountable to the people, and they will best determine whether or not they feel our education system is going in the right direction."

The commissioner oversees the Department of Education and answers to the state Board of Education in matters affecting all levels of education in Florida.

Since the elected commissioner was abolished, Democrats have tried in vain to pass similar resolutions.

Pruitt, R-Port St. Lucie, also wants the same package to limit the powers of the Board of Governors, which oversees the state university system. The board was created in 2003 by Republicans as part of a reorganization.

Lawmakers and the board are wrangling in court over who has the authority to set tuition rates. The board has refiled a lawsuit, thrown out by a judge last month, against the legislature seeking the authority to set tuition rates.

"We're going to define the roles of what it is that they do and what we do," Pruitt said. "Setting tuition is a legislative role. They need to be at the 40,000 foot level to where they can truly plan for the future in terms of what Florida's university system needs to look like. ... I think they need to be making a much broader view of it. In terms of tuition and the funding of it, that's the role of the legislature."

House leaders said Tuesday that they also back a constitutional amendment redefining the board's authority.

"A court of law, in my view, is not the place for us to decide who governs whom as it relates to higher education in Florida," House Schools and Learning Council Chairman Joe Pickens, R-Palatka, said at a meeting of the Republican caucus.

Pickens said the amendment should set out "who's governing who, who sets tuition, who determines what courses can be offered, what baccalaureate degrees can be offered where and when and by whom and how."
Florida A&M University

Student PR firm expands client list
02/20/2008 © Tallahassee Democrat

The student-run PRodigy public-relations firm at Florida A&M University announced Tuesday four new company initiatives, including projects to promote increased awareness of diabetes on campus and encourage more seat belt use by young drivers and their passengers.

The all-volunteer company's mission is to provide real-life, hands-on training and experience for students who are full-time public-relations majors.

"We have entered into a long-term partnership with the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control in support of their national diabetes education program," said senior Tuesday Donaldson during a morning press conference. PRodigy will develop a model initiative to increase awareness, acceptance and action about diabetes among members of the campus community, she explained.

PRodigy will also work as a partner with Ron Sachs Communications of Tallahassee and the Governor's Adoption initiative on outreach efforts to the African-American community.

A third project involves assisting FAMU's Dr. Charles Wright in the "Safely Ride or Die" campaign, a statewide effort to encourage safety-belt use by black youths. PRodigy is also the official publicity committee for the upcoming inauguration of FAMU President James Ammons.

"I want to thank all of you for this energy and this event," said James Hawkins, dean of the School of Journalism & Graphic Communication. "It's a great day."

PRodigy is staffed by 61 associates who manage the company and provide a menu of services to clients, said FAMU professor and faculty adviser Gina Kinchlow, who began working with the firm in 2006.

The press conference also included the unveiling of a new PRodigy logo that represents the students' youth, creative talent and their curiosity about new ideas, the students said.
Boca Raton: Students, parents invited to college planning session
02/20/2008 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel

High school students and their parents are invited to a college planning workshop scheduled from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. today at Patch Reef Park's James A. Rutherford Community Center, 2000 W. Yamato Road.

Representatives from the admission departments at more than 10 Florida public and private universities and colleges will provide information and answer questions.

Participating higher education institutions include Florida Atlantic University and Lynn University. The event is co-sponsored by Boca Raton's Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Educational Excellence organization of Highland Beach.

Famed White House correspondent to speak at FAU
02/20/2008 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel

If there's one constant fixture in the ever-changing worlds of politics and journalism, it's Helen Thomas.

For almost half a century, she has sat in the front row during the news briefings of nine presidents, from John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush.

For most of that time, when she worked for United Press International wire service, she asked the first question and ended with, "Thank you, Mr. President." Her aggressive questions have been known to make some presidents uncomfortable. She is now a columnist for Hearst newspapers.

"I don't cozy up to any president. I don't worship at their shrine," she said in an interview from her office in Washington, D.C. "Presidents are public servants. I pay them. You pay them. I expect them to obey the law, just like I expect any citizen to do the same."

Thomas, 87, will share her observations from her years of covering the White House in a speech today at Florida Atlantic University called "Women, Washington and the War."
The event is part of FAU's Alan B. Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency.

"She is a witness to history, and someone who is a history-maker herself," said Ken Osgood, an associate professor of history who helped organize the event. "She broke the gender barriers."

FAU graduate student Lauren Selsky, 25, of Delray Beach, wants to hear more about her views on Bush. She plans to interview Thomas for the Web site of the University Press, the student newspaper, and wonkette.com, a Washington, D.C., political gossip site.

"I want to ask her what she thinks the president's values should be and what his are," Selsky said.

Thomas's harshest criticism of Bush came in January 2003, when she commented to another reporter that he was "the worst president ever."

After initially apologizing to Bush, she now stands by the statement.

"I think it's become more and more true in the minds of Americans," she said.

She famously told Bush in a news conference that all his stated reasons for going to war in Iraq turned out to be false. She then asked him, "Why did you really want to go to war?" Bush denied wanting to go to war.

Even though Thomas still sits in the front row, Bush doesn't call on her much anymore.

"He doesn't like my questions, so at the last two news conferences, he has skipped me," she said. "I don't blame him. I ask him very tough questions. Five years of war, and a man cannot explain why we went to war against a country that did nothing to us."

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**Florida Gulf Coast University**

**First 100 days go smoothly for FGCU’s president**
02/20/2008 © Naples Daily News

When his tenure is over as president, Wilson Bradshaw envisions a Florida Gulf Coast University with a strong presence throughout Southwest Florida, heavy online course offerings and satellite campuses throughout the landscape.
During his first 100 days as FGCU president — today is his 100th day — Bradshaw worked toward that goal, but he also attended to the business of the university and filled his schedule with meeting various members of the outside community.

“The president must be out in front. He is the one carrying the torch for the university,” said Ben Hill Griffin, one of FGCU’s founders and a fellow with the FGCU Foundation. “He’s done a fine job. He has reached out to the community, and he’s a great communicator.”

When Bradshaw started on Nov. 13, he came to a university that had been without a permanent president for 10 months after former president Bill Merwin resigned. FGCU faced budget cuts from the Florida Legislature, a pending tuition increase and sex discrimination claims in the athletics department that has just moved to NCAA Division I competition.

In one of his first official acts as president, he asked for the resignation of Bonnie Yegidis, the provost and vice president of academic affairs. The search committee charged with finding her replacement has narrowed the list to 12 applicants. Bradshaw wants someone who will led the academic charge at FGCU as well as be his second-in-command in all university functions.

“I’m pleased with the quality of the applicants,” he said. “That is a very, very key position at FGCU.”

The first 100 days has been particularly busy for Bradshaw as he acclimates himself with the Southwest Florida community and familiarizes himself with the campus and its residents.

“My calendar is very full, but I felt very obligated to meet with as many people as possible,” Bradshaw said. “I anticipate that will slow down as time wears on.”

That schedule of community meetings takes Bradshaw away from the day-to-day operations of FGCU, but it is vital to developing his vision of the university. FGCU can’t have its enhanced presence in Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hendry and Glades counties without the cooperation of its collective communities.

For FGCU students, Bradshaw’s first 100 days hasn’t impacted classes or their day-to-day life.
“If he can help change things and have a vision for the school, that’s great,” said Brandi Norton, a senior legal studies major. “I’ve never met him, and I don’t know what his vision is or anything.”

Although he doesn’t know a lot about Bradshaw, junior business major Casey O’Connor said it spoke volumes when the new president came out for an environmental event, something that never happened under the previous administration.

“It was encouraging that he showed up,” O’Connor said.

The learning curve in the first 100 days was steep, Bradshaw said, but his seven years as president of Metropolitan State University in St. Paul, Minn. prepared him for the task at FGCU.

“I also work with very good and committed folks at the university,” he said.

After two months as FGCU president, Bradshaw was confronted with several investigations saying the athletics director and the associate athletics director had wrongly given bad evaluations to the only two female head coaches in the department. The investigations also said one of those coaches — volleyball coach Jaye Flood — had pursued an inappropriate relationship with a student working for her.

Bradshaw responded by giving written reprimands to Athletics Director Carl McAloose and Associate Athletics Director Kathy Peterson; and firing Flood, who had just filed a discrimination and defamation lawsuit against FGCU.

With the investigations over and the athletics department hiring two new female head coaches for golf and tennis, Bradshaw wants to focus on bettering athletic performance on the field because a solid Division I program will raise the university’s profile.

“I am very pleased with the direction and leadership of our athletics program,” he said. “We are going to really have a high quality Division I athletics program ... I am proud of the way we have performed thus far.”

Further increasing FGCU’s profile is the addition of its first doctoral program, which is in physical therapy.

This will be the start of something big, Bradshaw said. With more classes — particularly online courses — the university can serve a greater population in Southwest Florida. Add in a few FGCU sites in places such as Charlotte County
and Naples, and the university will have the enhanced presence Bradshaw envisions in the five-county area.

“Go Eagles,” he said.

**FGCU dedicates waterfront lab on Bonita beach**
02/20/2008 © Naples Daily News

Florida Gulf Coast University on Tuesday planted its flag in Bonita Springs.

FGCU’s aquatic lab on Bonita Beach Road was dedicated officially Tuesday night paving the way for scholars and scientists to study and experiment with the Estero Bay estuary on Little Hickory Island.

The hope is the lab will enhance the education of FGCU students, raise the stature of the 10-year-old university in the Southwest Florida community and form a symbiotic relationship with the surrounding area.

“This is the highest and best use of this property,” said Norm Vester, who sold the property to FGCU. “This place is wonderful.”

The Florida Gulf Coast University Norm and Nancy Vester Marine and Environmental Science Research Field Station can house both scientists and students and offers 11 docks and water access for various uses.

The property gives researchers access to mangroves, oyster reefs, mud flats and sea grasses.

In addition to boat and canoe launching, the lab already is used for shellfish reef restoration and long-term experiments that require access to fresh sea water. The facility can help the university partner with various aquatic authorities in the area.

“I hope this is a great expansion of our program, and it is a step toward the full expansion of our program,” said marine science major Holly Kline, who added FGCU should create several field stations in the area.

As part of Bonita Springs, researchers and students at the facility will help improve the surrounding area by participating in beach and river clean-ups. A scientific research facility raises the profile of Bonita Springs.
“It is going to bring people from all over the world to the area,” Bonita Mayor Jay Arend said. “What a great place to do some environmental work.”

The lab is just off Bonita Beach Road at the eastern edge of Little Hickory Island. Calm and serene, the beautiful property is an escape from the hurried thoroughfare, which is barely noticeable despite being only a few yards away.

“I wouldn’t mind going back to school if it was for some place like this,” Arend said.

The property is the former Bonita Beach Plantation Resort, which was managed by the Vesters. The university purchased the site with more than $1 million in donations, and the Vesters will stay on the property during season alongside the various FGCU residents.

“The once charming resort is now humming with scientific experimentation,” said Aswani Volety, chair of the department of marine and ecological sciences.

The Vesters decided to sell the property to FGCU at a large discount after encountering a number of university students in the area and wanting to help enhance their education and preserve the property they maintained for so long.

“We are overwhelmed,” Norm Vester said. “We want to thank everybody.”

As FGCU has grown rapidly in the 10 years since its creation, the aquatic lab shows how it is expanding and becoming a comprehensive state university.

“This facility underscores our desire to serve the needs of Southwest Florida,” FGCU President Wilson Bradshaw said.
Performances are scheduled for 8 p.m. Feb. 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29 and March 1; and 2 p.m. Feb. 24 and March 2 at the Richard G. Fallon Theatre located inside the Fine Arts Building at the corner of Copeland and Call streets.

The School of Theatre's Actors From the London Stage will present Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew" as part of the Seven Days of Opening Nights Festival at 8 p.m. Feb. 25 and 26 at Turner Auditorium.

Fletcher's bawdy play finds Petruccio's shrewish first wife, Katharine, gone and Petruccio newly married to Maria, a young, quiet woman who loves him very much. Fully aware of Petruccio's reputation as a woman-tamer, Maria has other plans.

Resolved not to submit to her new husband's tyranny, Maria enlists the help of Katharine's sister, Bianca, along with the rest of towns-women to tame the tamer and to fight for equality between the sexes.

Tickets may be purchased by visiting tickets.fsu.edu or calling the Fine Arts Ticket Office at 644-6500.

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New College of Florida

No Articles Today

University of Central Florida

Central Florida Future - Tragedy should lead to action, not apathy
02/20/2008 © Central Florida Future

In the wake of Thursday's tragedy at Northern Illinois University, it's no surprise that students, parents and staff at schools across the country are once again debating the issue of campus security.

Where is it? What has been done? What is going to be done?

Unfortunately, the answer is one that remains unseen. It's been nearly a year since Virginia Tech, and there are still no improvements.

So what exactly can be done? What's the solution?

And, no, carrying guns on our campus isn't the solution. But that's a completely
different can of worms.

In the months following April 16, 2007, Al Harms, vice president for UCF Strategic Planning and Initiatives, and the rest of the UCF administration were gung-ho for finding new ways to prevent tragedies just like these. The end result however, was the decision that protective procedures were just too expensive.

Safety shouldn't have a price tag.

I'm aware that universities all over Florida are facing budget cuts and faculty firing. I understand that. What I don't understand is how year after year new stadiums are built and practice facilities constructed, but we can't somehow fund the things that will make our campus safer.

We currently want to expand the Recreation and Wellness Center, but we can't expand campus police. Why do we have donors giving millions of dollars to new buildings and none who are willing to give a little extra for security?

I'll be the first to admit that metal detectors and mass text messaging may not be the solution, but they're certainly a step in the right direction.

On an open campus as large as UCF's, like many universities across the country, the chances of preventing something like VT and NIU may be slim to nil, but the university has an obligation to its students, an obligation to make this campus the safest it possibly can be.

Right now, I don't think the appropriate steps are being taken.

The bigger tragedy however, may lie in the fact that people just don't care anymore.

For months after VT, every major media source was on top of covering breaking news and agonizing over new leads into facts about the shooting. For nearly a month it was the top headline in every newspaper and the main story on every major news station.

The day after NIU, media didn't seem to be thinking twice about what happened. It was like it just got swept under the rug. But why?

Sadly enough, it's because these tragedies are not surprising to people anymore.

Shootings such as these are becoming so commonplace that news about Britney Spears is the bigger story on MSNBC.
Don't get me wrong. I don't necessarily think all the media attention most tragedies get these days is warranted.

Why must media conglomerates plaster the shooter's picture all over the screen, making him a celebrity and sensationalizing the whole situation.

But that doesn't mean these tragedies should fall by the wayside as if they never happened. We can't let these tragedies become as common as other crimes. We can't stand by praying nothing happens to us or to our school.

Changes need to be made, no matter how small and no matter how expensive. Our lives literally depend on it.

**Nemours Orlando Children's Hospital gets green light**
02/20/2008 © Orlando Sentinel

After 2 1/2 years, three applications, four address changes and at least five months of behind-the-scenes negotiations, Nemours Orlando Children's Hospital received a final, official go-ahead Tuesday.

"It's a milestone for our organization and the community," said Jeffrey Green, the Nemours Foundation's chief administrator for Florida. Final approval from state health-care regulators started the clock on the children's hospital, with a groundbreaking required within 18 months.

The hospital, to be built in Lake Nona's "medical city" near the University of Central Florida College of Medicine and the Burnham Institute for Medical Research, should open in 2012, Green said. The entire project, including an on-site clinic, will cost an estimated $400 million.

It will be Orlando's third children's hospital, joining Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children, operated by Orlando Regional Healthcare, and Florida Children's Hospital, part of the Florida Hospital system.

The two hospital systems opposed Nemours' hospital plans from the moment they were announced in July 2005, arguing that a third children's hospital in Central Florida would be duplicative and unnecessary.
The state, which requires new hospitals to prove their need through a certification process, initially agreed with the project's opponents. It turned down Nemours' first two applications, both of which would have placed the new hospital just four miles from downtown, near Mall at Millenia in south Orlando.

But in June, after Nemours changed the proposed hospital's location to Lake Nona and emphasized the potential for pediatric research, the state gave its preliminary approval. Orlando Regional and Florida Hospital subsequently appealed the state's decision, triggering a process that promised to drag on for years.

Before the appeals were filed, officials with Orlando Regional and Florida Hospital insisted they were not trying to block Jacksonville-based Nemours from building its hospital. Instead, they were looking to ensure that Nemours would live up to the promises it made to the community in its state application.

Negotiations, which began in early September, bogged down. All sides agreed Tuesday that the talks might have failed had it not been for pressure from two local legislators: state House Speaker-designate Dean Cannon and state Sen. Daniel Webster.

Two years ago, Nemours began, then decided against, seeking an exemption from the Legislature in anticipation of the state certification process going against it. This time around, the politicians put it bluntly: Either work things out or the Legislature will do it for you.

"We told them, 'If you can reach agreement among yourselves, such a solution will be more fine-tuned and elegant than anything that would emerge from the legislative process,' " Cannon said Tuesday.

The three hospitals' chief executives -- Dr. David Bailey of Nemours, John Hillenmeyer of Orlando Regional and Lars Houmann of Florida Hospital -- reached an agreement in late December. But the final legal document requiring state approval took weeks to complete.

The settlement includes the assurances his hospital was looking for, said John Bozard, president of Arnold Palmer.

"Most of the agreement was making sure that [pediatric] patients from all areas of the city and the community would have access to care" at the Nemours hospital, he said.
While Nemours had pledged in its state application to devote at least 54 percent of its hospital care to Medicaid and charity patients, "we had a concern about the state of Florida not having a history of enforcing conditions," Bozard said.

In addition to the commitment for Medicaid and charity care, the agreement released Tuesday includes pledges by Nemours to spend at least $3 million a year on clinical research; to donate $3.5 million over 10 years to Orange County clinics serving uninsured children; to make public its annual expenditures on charity care; and to hire at least 50 full-time pediatric subspecialists from outside Central Florida within the hospital's first five years.

It's that last commitment that has many local pediatricians skeptical, given the nationwide shortage of pediatric subspecialists. But Nemours' Green, while acknowledging the skepticism, said the doctors may be missing a key point.

"The pediatric subspecialists we're looking for will look at the quality of our organization and our commitment to pediatrics that allows them to fulfill not only their clinical interests, but their research and educational interests as well," he said.

Lake Nona's medical city in southeast Orlando offers that allure. Nemours caused some ripples in December when it announced it would move its planned hospital to an undeveloped site two miles away on Boggy Creek Road. But last month Nemours announced a deal with Lake Nona's developers to return to the fold.

Just to reiterate, Green said Tuesday: "We're definitely going to Lake Nona."

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University of Florida

'Idol' competitor crowned Miss UF
02/20/2008 © Gainesville Sun

They were judged on artistic ability, intelligence, community activity, poise and fitness. They were tanned, primped and mentally prepared to perfection.

Continue to 2nd paragraph Two women were crowned in the Miss University of Florida and Miss Florida Gator scholarship pageant. Twenty-two UF women competed for the titles and scholarships.

Sarah Weisbruch, Miss Florida Gator, and Brooke Helvie, Miss University of Florida, were chosen as the pagaent winners, and both received $750 cash
scholarships and numerous gift certificates from community businesses. These two women are now eligible to compete in the Miss Florida pageant in July, which is affiliated with the Miss America Organization.

Weisbruch, a 22-year-old UF senior, wowed the audience with her baton twirling, a skill she has been refining since elementary school.

With the UF marching band's music in the background, she brought the audience to the swamp as she performed an intricate routine.

Although this was her first pageant, Weisbruch is no stranger to being in the spotlight. For four years she performed before thousands of people as a Gatorette. Performing in the stadium is exhilarating, she said.

Weisbruch was sponsored by the UF Marching Band and Gatorettes. She loves baton-twirling and entertaining, but it was a little more nerve-racking being alone on the stage and not having her squad with her, she said.

Helvie, a 19-year-old freshman, was 2007 Miss South Florida Fair and a recent contestant on "American Idol." She was sponsored by The Radiology Group.

Helvie said that pageants have helped her in positive ways in many areas.

"Doing pageants has helped me think on my feet and communicate with people," Helvie said.

The journey for these women has just begun. They now have the task of spreading awareness for their platforms and preparing for the Miss Florida pageant.

Both women received three-month memberships to Gainesville Health & Fitness Centers to help prepare for the pageant this summer.

Each contestant was required to have a charity that they supported and volunteered for as a platform.

Weisbruch chose Therapy Through the Arts as her platform. With this she hopes to use her education and talent to lift people's spirits and incorporate all forms of art into rehabilitation in hospitals.

Helvie's platform is Hope & Healing Through Music, which she says aims to promote healing through music in hospitals and also spreading awareness to the negative lyrics in songs on the radio.
Inspiring young engineers at E-Fair
02/20/2008 © Gainesville Sun

In front of their biggest crowd, University of Florida engineers got a chance to show off their robots, planes and, of course, their ice cream at the 63rd Annual Engineering & Science Fair on Monday and Tuesday.

Over 1,000 students from nine counties in North Central Florida came Tuesday to check out all the E-Fair’s interactive exhibits at the Reitz Student Union Grand Ballroom.

“This is a record attendance for us,” E-Fair Executive Director Matt Sobieski said. “Most of the students are actually from Alachua County. This is actually the first year that we’ve reached out to other counties. This year we have students coming from Marion County, Union County, Gilchrist, Columbia, all the surrounding counties.”

The E-Fair is just one of 12 events that make up Engineers Week, which began Friday and will end on Saturday. The E-Fair stands as the cornerstone of E-Week, which looks to inspire young engineers.

Katherine Van Zant took her four children to the E-Fair mainly as a birthday trip for her 8-year-old son, Daniel, who’s “always making inventions and making up robots.”

With its “Stepping into the Future” theme this year, every one of her children had a favorite station.

“It’s fascinating. It really ended up being good for all ages,” said Van Zant, who is an engineer herself. “They did a good job of showing hands-on science activities and then explaining what the theory was behind it. Daniel loves robots so much, and Katie (16) is interested in health and medicine so the radiation oncology (exhibit) was her favorite.”

The Center for Catalysis earned this year’s top exhibit at the awards ceremony on Tuesday.

The exhibit provided information about synthetic, theoretical and physical aspects of inorganic chemistry. It found a good way to convey some of that science to the children.
“They were actually combining ingredients and making play dough,” Sobieski said. “Kids could get their hands in there and play around with it, and that was probably one of the most interactive, hands-on things.”

The Visitors’ Choice Award was given to the American Institute of Chemical Engineering, which even got dads off the wave street surfing boards and moms out of the flight simulators. Everyone, including event organizers, rushed over every 10 to 15 minutes to fight past the kids once the engineers made the announcement to come get some liquid nitrogen ice cream.

“I haven’t gotten any yet this year,” said E-Fair Director Kathryn Kearns, who says the ice cream is always a big hit at the fair. “I keep getting beat out by all these little kids.

UF experts: Castro policies live on
02/20/2008 © Gainesville Sun

For a man who clung so furiously to power for so long, Fidel Castro's planned resignation may seem surprising.

But the Cuban leader's decision to step aside may be the very thing that will keep his communist revolution alive for years to come, according to University of Florida experts.

Castro, the cigar-puffing leftist icon who seized power a half century ago, announced Tuesday that he will resign as president. Few, however, underestimate Castro's continued influence. Ailing at 81 years old, Castro still has interest in seeing the reins of power handed off to someone who will carry on his policies, according to Carmen Diana Deere, director of UF's Center for Latin American Studies.

"It shows, I think, wisdom," said Deere, a professor of food and resource economics. "The revolution has a better chance of surviving if everything is formal. This is his officially supervising the transfer of power."

Most analysts believe the power will go to Raul Castro, Fidel Castro's brother.

If reforms are pending in Cuba, they're likely to happen in the economic area, according to Terry McCoy, a UF professor emeritus of Latin American studies. The country's "command economy," which is under complete government control, has created financial hardships for most of the population, he said.
In recent years, however, Cuban leaders have allowed some private business to emerge in the tourism and energy sectors, McCoy said.

"Fidel has resisted (a market-driven economy), and there is some reason to believe that Raul is open to more possibilities," McCoy said.

U.S. officials were quick to say Tuesday that there are no signs that point to the lifting of the 50-year-old Cuban embargo.

While the embargo prevents Cuba from importing goods into the U.S., significant loopholes allow for U.S. companies to import into Cuba. Indeed, the United States had a record year with $437 million in agricultural exports to Cuba in 2007, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"It puts them in the top 35 U.S. ag export markets, so it's not insignificant," said Bill Messina, an agricultural economist with UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

Some would like to see the U.S. open up to exports from Cuba, but Messina says he doesn't see that happening anytime soon.
Citrus research Local UF scientist recognized by national magazine
02/20/2008 © Winter Haven News Chief

KE ALFRED - A scientist at the University of Florida Citrus Research and Education Center was recently recognized by Genome Technology Magazine in New York.

Dr. Madhugiri Nageswara-Rao's work in the fields of citrus breeding and genetics, agricultural genomics and forest genetics were discussed in the magazine's December 2007/January 2008 issue.

Nageswara-Rao is the only scientist featured in the magazine from Florida and among the few young scientists from around the world who were chosen for the coveted position of being featured on the cover.

According to Genome Technology Magazine, Nageswara-Rao came to the University of Florida from India, where he was a research associate at the University of Agricultural Sciences in Bangalore.

He currently works as a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Florida.

University of North Florida

African-American art expert at UNF
02/20/2008 © Florida Times-Union

A prolific painter and leading authority on African-American art, David C. Driskell, will be the centerpiece of a night of entertainment today in the Fine Arts Center Recital Hall at the University of North Florida.

"An Evening with Dr. David C. Driskell" will begin at 6 p.m. with a performance by percussionist Charlotte Mabrey. Artist Jefferson Pinder, a Driskell protege, will speak at 6:40 p.m. followed by a performance by the UNF Gospel Choir. Driskell will speak at 7:30 p.m. and will be available after the event to sign his latest book, Dr. David C. Driskell: Artist and Scholar.

The son of a Georgia sharecropper, Driskell retired in 1998 as distinguished university professor and chairman of the University of Maryland Department of
Art. In 2000, he received the National Humanities Medal from President Clinton, and The David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the Visual Arts and Culture of African Americans and the African Diaspora at the University of Maryland is named in his honor.

His work and that of Pinder has been on display at the University of North Florida's University Gallery and will close with a 5 to 7 p.m. reception Thursday featuring both artists.

The talk and the reception are free and open to the public.

University of South Florida

USF Lakeland grants help shrink 'digital divide'
02/20/2008 © Tampa Bay Business Journal

The University of South Florida is working to increase the participation of under-represented populations, women and persons with disabilities in computing disciplines.

USF Lakeland received $117,806 to fund a three-year extension of a program with Students & Technology in Academia, Research & Service Alliance. That money, along with $137,034 received for the first three years, brings USF Lakeland's total STARS funding to more than $254,000.

STARS uses multi-faceted interventions focused on the influx and progression of students from middle school through graduate school that lead to computing careers. Through STARS, students receive academic and social development through mentoring and applied learning experiences, a release said.

The additional funding gives USF Lakeland the opportunity to strengthen its partnership with Polk Community College and to help faculty and staff to recruit, retain and graduate women and underrepresented students in computing, faculty said in the release.

Formed in the spring of 2005 in response to the National Science Foundation's Broadening Participation in Computing program, the STARS Alliance is comprised of the following academic institutions: Auburn University, Florida A&M, Florida State, Georgia Southern University, Georgia Tech, Hampton University, Johnson C. Smith University, Landmark College, Meredith College, North Carolina A&T, North Carolina State, Saint Augustine's College, Shaw University, Spelman College, University of North Carolina Charlotte, University
Carnival History Goes Digital
02/20/2008 © Tampa Bay Online

RIVERVIEW - The local showmen's club and the University of South Florida Library have teamed up to preserve the colorful history of the carnival industry.

The International Independent Showmen's Association, with headquarters in Riverview, is working with USF to develop a computer photo collection of carnival history.

There's plenty of photographs and other paper memorabilia, such as tickets, programs and news clippings, available for the digital photo history, said Chuck Mayo, the showmen's club member in charge of the project.

Many of the old photographs are in boxes in the carnival museum housed in a small building on the club grounds and in some of the 25 trailers of carnival history stored at the facility.

Eventually, copies of the old photos combined with the other carnival memorabilia - from horse-drawn wagons to costumes and props - will be housed in the museum. The shell of the building has been constructed; additional work is being done on a "pay-as-you-go basis," with no schedule on when the project will be completed, museum director Ivan Arnold said.

Andrew Huse, an assistant librarian for the USF library's special collections department, said he was overwhelmed on his first visit to the club grounds last year and saw what he described as "a treasure trove of history. It's truly a world-class collection."

He also saw that some of the old items were being stored outdoors and need to be preserved and copied as soon as possible.

Huse gave Mayo a list of computer equipment the club would need to copy and preserve the photos and to have the copies compatible with the USF library's archives.

The showmen's club has spent about $8,000 on the project for supplies and equipment. Huse and other staff members from USF have visited the trailer
where the project is housed and instructed Mayo and other volunteers on how to create a digital history.

Huse said the plan is to have the carnival history linked or included in the university library online photo histories.

The photo partners are looking for grant money to allow the USF staff to work more closely with the carnival photos.

In the meantime, Mayo works several days a week scanning photos into the computer and then preserving the originals in clear envelopes and filing them.

For many of the photos, Mayo has no clue about details. When the photos eventually are posted to a Web site for public viewing, Mayo hopes people will recognize aspects of the old photos and contact him so he can add more information.

Mayo, who travels the carnival circuit as a glass blower and with food concessions, enjoys working with the photographs.

"If I could, I would do this full time," he said. "I think there is a lot of interest in this collection. When it's done, the whole world will be able to look at our history," he said.

**It Pays To Stay At USF Patel**
02/20/2008 © Tampa Tribune

USF CAMPUS - Teachers who stay at the USF Patel Charter School will get some extra cash this year.

The board for the charter elementary school recently approved a plan to give its teachers $1,500 if they return to teach next school year. The plan is a move to retain teachers and motivate them to get additional training and education.

About half of the charter school's teachers this year are new to the school, with four starting straight out of college. School leaders say they frequently lose teachers to relocations, changes in careers and higher salary offers from other schools. The starting salary at USF Patel is $37,000.

USF Patel gave its teachers a 4.5 percent raise last year, but the Hillsborough County School District gave its teachers an 8 percent raise. Although USF Patel is
part of the school district, its board members set a separate pay scale because of the charter status.

With public schools facing a budget crisis this year, education leaders predict few schools will dole out large pay raises for next school year, so schools are turning to other incentives to keep teachers happy.

The USF Patel board looked at offering tuition help for teachers who wanted to pursue a master's degree at the University of South Florida; the plan was cost-prohibitive, so the board crafted a retention bonus plan.

Any USF Patel teacher who has completed a year of successful teaching (determined by the principal) and signs a contract to teach during the 2008-09 school year will receive the $1,500 bonus. If the teacher leaves before the year is up, that teacher will have to pay back the bonus at a prorated amount.

"If there is a chance they are thinking about leaving, this would be a positive step to entice them to stay," said Principal Rylene Stein.

The board said it also will continue to look at ways to promote to teachers the benefits of working at a school on a college campus.

Local news briefs
02/20/2008 © Winter Haven News Chief

LAKELAND - The University of South Florida Lakeland will debut a new kiosk at Lakeland Square Mall on Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The kiosk is designed to help promote USF Lakeland's programs and activities.

Slated to be at the mall for the kickoff ceremony are USF Lakeland Vice President and Chief Executive Officer Marshall Goodman, Rocky the Bull, students, faculty and staff members. USF Lakeland souvenirs items will be distributed.

Located near the food court, the USF Lakeland kiosk will be staffed during peak mall hours.

For details call Jennifer Beyer at 877-536-2939 or jbeyer@lakeland.usf.edu.

University of West Florida
No Articles Today
Asians, not whites, hurt most by race-conscious admissions

02/20/2008 © USA Today

Where such institutions have been banned from considering applicants’ race, the study finds, enrollment of Asian-Americans has increased while admissions of whites remained flat and or, in some cases, declined.

By Peter Schmidt

The long-running debate over affirmative action in college admissions just got more complicated, thanks to a new study that challenges the common assumption that whites are hurt most when colleges take applicants’ race and ethnicity into account.

The study, published by the University of California-Los Angeles last week in the scholarly journal InterActions, suggests that it is mainly Asian-Americans not whites who are held to a higher standard when top colleges use affirmative action.

Where such institutions have been banned from considering applicants' race, the study finds, enrollment of Asian-Americans has increased while admissions of whites remained flat or, in some cases, declined. The study, an analysis of long-term enrollment trends at several exclusive public universities, found that the Asian-American share of enrollment increased:

*More than 15% at the University of Texas at Austin after a 1996 federal court ruling barred consideration of race in admissions.

*More than 15% at the University of Florida after Gov. Jeb Bush persuaded the state university system's governing board to vote in 2000 to end race- and ethnicity-conscious admissions.

*More than 20% at the University of California-Berkeley, more than 10% at UCLA and more than 30% at the University of California-San Diego after that state's voters passed a 1996 ballot measure barring the use of affirmative-action preferences by public colleges and other state agencies.

Although David Colburn and his two co-authors consider themselves advocates of affirmative action, he acknowledged their numbers show "Asian-Americans were discriminated against under an affirmative-action system."
Colburn's assessment is in keeping with other research that has suggested that Asian-Americans are regarded as overrepresented on college campuses and therefore held to higher standards to keep their numbers down. The white applicants covered by this study fared no better in the absence of affirmative action than before. In fact, the number of white admissions in some cases dropped because of increased competition from Hispanics and from Asian-Americans.

This report comes as efforts are underway in Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska and Oklahoma to ban the use of affirmative action by public colleges and state agencies. Similar measures easily won approval in California, Michigan and Washington.

The authors of the new study seem to be hoping that their conclusions will erode white voters' support for such measures. Their report says their findings "can hardly be satisfying" to "those who campaigned for the elimination of affirmative action in the belief that it would advantage the admission of white students." The study even predicts a white backlash against race-neutral admissions policies if Asian-Americans continue to make gains.

Most leading Asian-American advocacy groups have supported affirmative action. When the U.S. Supreme Court last weighed in on the legality of colleges' use of affirmative action in admissions in two University of Michigan rulings in 2003, 28 Asian-American organizations signed a legal brief urging the court to uphold such policies given the educational benefits of diversity. (A 5-4 majority of justices agreed with such logic.)

In the long term, it's unclear what impact this new study will have on the views of Asian-Americans or the views of the courts. If colleges are using race-conscious admissions policies to limit enrollments of Chinese-, Vietnamese-, Indian- and Japanese-Americans, will they be able to continue convincing the courts that their intent is the promotion of diversity?


Community College Gunman Turns Himself In
02/20/2008 © Orlando-WESH (NBC)
GAINESVILLE, Fla. -- The man who caused Santa Fe Community College to lockdown and suspend all classes and activities Tuesday afternoon has turned himself in to authorities, Alachua County sheriff public information officer Art Forgey said.

Talon D. Jackson, a student at the school, reportedly displayed a gun at the campus food court around noon EST, but did not fire.

Police from Alachua County, Gainesville and the University of Florida worked with the Santa Fe Community College Police Department to conduct a thorough search of the campus, but Jackson could not be found. Police worked to escort students and faculty safely off campus while the search was in progress.

A few minutes prior to 5 p.m., Jackson turned himself in to Gainesville police without incident at the nearby Melrose apartments, Forgey said. It is unknown whether he has a prior criminal history.

The school Web site reported that all classes and activities were suspended, but are scheduled to resume at 7 p.m.

Santa Fe Community College has an emergency alert system, but one student said he did not receive a text message or e-mail to notify him of the danger.

Jackson faces charges of aggravated assault and possession of a firearm on a school campus. His bond has been set a $800,000.

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**Advanced Placement produces college-ready scholars**

02/20/2008 © Daytona Beach News-Journal

DETONA -- Stacy Meadows' high school teachers would be pleased to know they succeeded in their ever-daunting task of getting her ready for the next academic level by teaching Advanced Placement courses.

"If anything, AP classes over-prepared me for college," said the 2007 graduate of Deltona High School. "The courses were rigorous and time consuming, but overall I feel like they were worthwhile."

Deltona High has offered courses in the Advanced Placement program, commonly called AP, since the school opened in 1989. The courses are college-level classes in science, literature, art, math and other subjects that a student can take while in high school. They are designed by college professors and experienced Advanced Placement teachers from across the country and are
taught in all Volusia and Flagler county high schools as well across the nation and more than 100 countries globally.

"The AP program creates consistency across the nation and has world-wide accountability," said Les McLean, assistant principal in charge of curriculum and instruction at Deltona High.

Along with the course itself, a final Advanced Placement examination is administered to test how well the student performed. The test does not affect the letter grade a student receives, and instead is scored on a scale of 1-5.

If a student scores a 3 or higher, that student can qualify for either college credit or placement.

"They were definitely more challenging and thought provoking than normal high school classes," Meadows said of the courses. She took seven advanced courses while at Deltona and now attends the University of South Florida.

The program has shown growth both at Deltona High and in Volusia County. In 2006, Deltona High had 398 students take the Advanced Placement examination. In 2007, that number was up to 438. DeLand High has the most AP courses available in West Volusia schools, with 23. Deltona comes in second, with 19.

About 2,500 students in the county completed one of the Advanced Placement courses in 2003 and took the examination. That number has jumped to 4,001 for 2007.

"Volusia County Schools has made a very deliberate and focused effort to increase the number of AP offerings in our schools," said Allene Dupont, director of K-12 curriculum and school improvement for the district.

"We want our AP program to grow and we are looking to add more courses in the future." McLean said.

Administrators at other schools see both the growth and value in the courses, too.

"The AP program has evolved from what some might call 'elitist' to a program that provides for all students' academic rigor and an avenue to hone critical thinking and other essential skills needed at the college level and beyond," said Cheryl Salerno, principal of Mainland High School.
"AP is an integral part of Spruce Creek's college preparatory curriculum," said Principal Tim Egnor. The benefits to college-bound students, he said, "can be documented not only in terms of credits, but also in scholarships and most importantly, in the success of students once they are in college or a university."

Spruce Creek offers 23 different AP courses, the most of any school in East Volusia county.

Administrators and graduates aren't the only ones who see the importance and benefits of taking on the challenge of college-level courses. Deltona High students and their teachers are openly supportive of the program.

"They are great preparation for college," said A.J. Hansborough, a Deltona High senior. "There is a lot more discussion instead of just taking notes, (AP classes) are more in depth."

Every class on Hansborough's current schedule is an AP course and his success has made him first overall in Deltona High's 2008 class ranking.

"I like the interaction with other students and coming together to work on a topic. And getting college credit is great," he said.

Judging from the school's recognition program of outstanding AP students, noted in their permanent academic records, Deltona High School's teachers, and their students, are doing a fine job. Last year, it had 28 advanced placement scholars, two scholars with honors, seven scholars with distinction, and 18 arts honor students.

Senior Charlotte Yilk said classes are "extremely beneficial." The teachers are passionate and it's nice to come to a classroom where there are students of the same caliber and that want the same things.

Sage Prowitt knows the payoff of the challenging classes will come when he reaches college.

"You have to have good time management skills (in college), which is something that being in AP classes helped me to develop," said Meadows.

Tammy Jones, English Language teacher, watches her students work in "literature circle" groups on projects for the books they're reading, shared her pleasure.
"Students really get into the work. They have to make connections with the pieces they're reading, and they come up with some great stuff."

All Advance Placement teachers use different methods and techniques to make sure their students are as prepared as possible for the final exam.

"There is always a question on the free response section of the AP exam that is lab related, so most of the labs I do in class are actually possible lab questions on the exam," said Norma Faria, an advanced placement chemistry teacher.

While some high school students may fall victim to "senioritis" when they enter their final year, those taking Advanced Placement have to remain focused, facing the challenges of a higher education that they have already begun.

**Two S. Florida community colleges to offer four-year bachelor's degree programs**

02/20/2008 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel

South Florida's community colleges aren't just for two-year degrees anymore.

The state Board of Education agreed Tuesday to let Broward Community College and Palm Beach Community College offer four-year bachelor's degree programs.

BCC plans to offer teaching degrees in five areas with a dire need for teachers: middle grades mathematics, middle grades science, high school biology, high school math and exceptional student education, also known as special education. The college hopes to enroll 60 students in its four-year program starting in January 2009.

PBCC students will be able to seek a bachelor of applied science in supervision and administration starting in fall 2009, officials said. The degree is designed for students who want to specialize in business, health or public safety administration. PBCC hopes to enroll 80 students the first year.

"We are responding to Palm Beach County's and Florida's growing need for bachelor's degree education," PBCC President Dennis Gallon said in a release. Tuition for the programs will be about $2,300 a year, compared to $3,400 for public universities and at least $19,000 for private universities, officials said.

Eight other community colleges offer the degrees, including Miami Dade College. BCC President David Armstrong said research has shown that four-year
degrees from state community colleges have so far proven to be just as valuable as those from universities.

"The feedback we get from school districts, hospitals and others hiring graduates is exceptionally strong," he said. "That's who we pay attention to."

BCC determined there was a need for some new teaching degrees after learning that Florida Atlantic University wasn't producing many degrees in certain teaching areas. For August 2007, Broward County School District had 190 vacancies in special education, with only 23 FAU graduates, BCC figures indicate. There were 169 vacancies in math, and two FAU graduates, and 148 in science, with one FAU graduate.

No one from FAU was available for comment late Tuesday afternoon, a spokeswoman said.

**BCC closer to offering a four-year teaching degree**

02/20/2008 © Miami Herald

Broward Community College is one step closer to offering a four-year degree in education, a move it hopes will alleviate teacher shortages and make higher education more affordable.

The Florida Board of Education approved the college's application Tuesday to offer a bachelor of science in education degree. It would be the college's first bachelor's program for its 60,000 students.

BCC applied for approval from the board, which governs public education in the state, after the school's trustees made the suggestion last year.

"This is historical," said Donna Henderson, interim vice president for academic affairs at BCC.

BCC's four-year education degree could be offered as soon as the fall session, providing the college gets additional approvals from the state and BCC's accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The new four-year degree will offer teaching concentrations in underserved areas such as middle-grades math, science, secondary biology, math and exceptional student education.
The need for teachers is great in Broward, officials say. The county has the sixth largest school district in the United States with an enrollment of 270,000 students.

Last August, Broward had 190 openings for exceptional student education instructors, 169 openings in mathematics and 148 vacancies in science.

College officials say BCC's tuition rate of $2,237 will be $1,200 less than Florida Atlantic University and Florida International University and $17,000 less than Nova Southeastern University.

BCC still will be a community college, with an open-door policy, and the bachelor's degree will be an addition, Henderson said.

Also, BCC will keep its close relationship with FAU, which will offer far more concentrations in the educational area than BCC's five concentrations, Henderson said.

In 1999, the Florida Legislature passed a law allowing community colleges to seek approval for bachelor's degrees in areas of high demand when four-year institutions couldn't fill the need.

Both BCC and Palm Beach Community College got the state education board's approval Tuesday to offer four-year degrees.

Miami-Dade College got approval from the state education board in 2002 to offer baccalaureate programs in education.

**Do not cut community college funding when trimming state budget**

02/20/2008 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel

Economists can ponder the question of whether the United States is in a recession, but the debate is over when it comes to Florida. The housing downturn and credit crunch have taken a severe economic toll on the Sunshine State, causing a sharp decline in tax revenue and necessitating some painful budget cuts in Tallahassee.

Fortunately, Gov. Charlie Crist hasn't allowed the revenue crunch to cloud his vision. Despite the economic troubles, his $70 billion budget actually calls for modest spending increases for education on all levels, including an additional $56 million for the state's community colleges.
The governor's budget requires tapping the state's "rainy day" reserves to make ends meet, which troubles some lawmakers, but guess what? The rain is coming down in sheets, and the whole idea of a rainy day fund is to set money aside during good economic times to help fund government during the bad times. When it meets in March, the Legislature should support the increased education funding, especially for the community colleges.

If lawmakers insist on trimming education expenses, they should look outside the community college system. State university law schools, which have proliferated in recent years, would make good targets. Florida doesn't need more lawyers, but it does need more highly trained nurses, technicians and police officers, which the community colleges produce.

"You can look at community college funding as part of an economic stimulus package," said J. David Armstrong Jr., president of Broward Community College. He points out that when the economy slows down, the demand for job retraining increases. "When the state invests in community colleges, it gets people back to work."

Crist's budget includes money for up to 19,000 new students statewide. "This year, we're going to have to concentrate on covering enrollment growth, and we'll need support from the Legislature to do it," Armstrong said.

Armstrong knows as well as anyone the politics that revolve around community college funding. Before assuming his role in the trenches at BCC in July, he served for six years as chancellor of Florida's community college system, which consists of 28 institutions throughout the state.

"We don't get pitted against each other," he said. "It helps to work with one voice when it comes to dealing with the Legislature."

His chancellor's duties included coordinating the community colleges' mission with those of K-12 and the state's universities. For years, community college officials complained they had to expend too many of their resources on remedial education for students who didn't receive adequate training in the public school system.

Armstrong still sees this as an issue, but he's not all doom and gloom. Much of the remedial work, he points out, deals with bringing people up to speed who are pursuing educational opportunities years after they left high school.
"A lot of our students are returning to the work force and have forgotten algebra. It's a lot like getting them back on a bicycle," he said.

Armstrong also thinks the educational reforms of the Bush administration are having a positive effect. "We're seeing some incremental improvement in performance already as students come in with better skills," he said. He expects to see even greater improvement when students who entered the school system during the early years of the Bush reforms begin showing up in the community colleges.

"The more rigorous standards are paying off. In another three or four years, we should really start seeing the difference."

As the K-12 system does a better job, the community colleges should be able to spend more resources on improving the quality and scope of their educational offerings.

A good educational system pays for itself by producing skilled workers capable of contributing to society, which includes paying taxes to fund the state's needs. The community colleges are vital to Florida's prosperity, and the Legislature must make sure they have the resources to do the job that is being asked of them.

National Higher Education Issues

College Giving Goes Up in 2007
02/20/2008 © Austin American-Statesman

Donations to colleges and universities rose solidly last year, to a record of nearly $30 billion, with the wealthiest universities again attracting a hugely disproportionate share, a new survey shows. But the economic downturn means the fundraising pace for 2008 could slow.

Private donations to higher education rose 6.3 percent last year to $29.75 billion, according to the annual Voluntary Support of Education survey, to be released Wednesday by the Council for Aid to Education.

The survey tracks donations by fiscal year, so the report for 2007 essentially covers the 2006-2007 school year and doesn't reflect the economic slowdown that began last fall.

The already wealthy schools — with leading faculty researchers and the most sophisticated fundraising operations — had the most success attracting new
donations. The top 20 fundraisers raised $518 million more than the previous year, and a total of $7.66 billion. They account for just 2 percent of survey respondents, but accounted for more than a quarter of all contributions to colleges and universities, and nearly one-third of the total increase in giving.

Stanford University raised $832.4 million, the most of any institution, though its total was down from the $911 million it raised in the previous year — the largest one-year haul ever for a university. Next was Harvard ($614 million), which has the largest total endowment, followed by the University of Southern California ($469.7 million) and Johns Hopkins ($430.5 million).

Next year's survey could mark the end of an extraordinary run for higher education that has let at least 76 institutions build endowments of $1 billion or more, according to the most recent figures from the National Association of College and University Business Officers.

During the last economic slowdown, in fiscal 2002 and 2003, fundraising growth was stagnant for two straight years.

"Anything to do with the economy, when people don't feel good, whether it's justified or not, it doesn't put them in a philanthropic mind-set as easily, there's no question about it," said Paul Robell, vice president for development and alumni affairs at the University of Florida. "It's just really a state of mind more than anything else."

Historically, economic conditions do affect giving to colleges, but not necessarily dramatically, said Ann Kaplan, who directs the survey.

"It tends to be fairly stable once someone has a habit of giving to a college or university," she said. "It's a fairly reliable connection people make to an institution they attended or some of the other institutions."

Florida raised $182 million last year, up from $161 million in 2006. A one-month record of $47 million came in during December alone.

"The biggest predictor of fundraising success is generally the stock market — if stocks are doing well fundraising does well," Robell said. But "we try to point out to people even if the market's down, most of their holdings are still vastly appreciated." Because of tax deductions, "it's still a good deal to make a gift with appreciated securities," he said.

The figures come as colleges have faced increasing demands from the public and in Congress to spend more of their endowments, particularly to keep tuition rises
in check. In recent months a string of institutions such as Harvard, Dartmouth and Swarthmore have announced significant expansions of financial aid.

The changes vary from school to school, but have generally involved giving out more grant money so low-income students can graduate with little or no debt, and expanding at least some need-based aid to higher-income families — in some cases those earning well into six figures.

Foundations accounted for the highest share of giving (28.6 percent), edging slightly ahead of alumni.

Donations from alumni fell slightly from last year but remain almost 17 percent higher than in 2005. The percentage of alumni who donate also fell slightly, to 11.7 percent on average.

**NIU reaction shows colleges learned from Virginia Tech tragedy, but there's little defense against an unstable person with a weapon**

02/20/2008 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel

ISSUE: Five shot to death on university campus.

Northern Illinois University's alert system worked quickly, and maybe that helped save lives. Police arrived on the scene almost immediately, and that too might have helped spare more injuries or fatalities.

It all worked, and it shows that universities learned from the murders at Virginia Tech last year. Still, five people were shot to death before gunman Steven Kazmierczak turned his weapon on himself. And, thus, another campus grieves over a shocking, seemingly inexplicable act of violence.

Whether it's a university campus, a shopping mall, or the workplace, senseless violence involving weapons is almost a staple in American culture these days. And just as perplexing is what to do about it.

Each incident, like the NIU carnage or the Virginia Tech massacre last year, elicits calls for sensible, stricter gun regulation. It also elicits counter arguments from people who correctly point out that people who want to kill will always find a weapon, legally or not.
The different spin from the NIU tragedy is the revelation that Kazmierczak had a history mental instability. There are reports that he had stopped taking his medication, and the lapse might have led to his snap.

If so, some good might come out of this terrible ordeal if more attention and resources are applied to mental health. Even if it's better watchfulness and oversight of people on medications to make sure they are taking them.

Ultimately, Americans must recognize there is little to stop an unstable individual with a weapon. We can devise better public safety response systems, and feel relieved when they work.

But there's virtually no defense against a delusional individual intent on killing.

BOTTOM LINE: Police, university reacted quickly, but there's little defense against a volatile person with a weapon.

**Few Colleges Follow Ivies with Aid to Middle Class**

02/20/2008 © WWSB ABC Sarasota County

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?'" says 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."

Alison Damast is a reporter for BusinessWeek.com.

**Private Donations to Colleges Increase for 4th Consecutive Year - Chronicle.com**
02/20/2008 © The Chronicle of Higher Education

Backed by a strong economy and a growing stock market, American colleges and universities raised an estimated $29.8-billion in the 2007 fiscal year, the highest total ever recorded, according to a report scheduled for release today by the Council for Aid to Education.

But the country's recent economic troubles have some fund-raising experts concerned that the high times might be coming to an end.

Private donations to colleges and universities climbed by 6.3 percent in 2007, the fourth consecutive year of growth, according to the report, which describes results from the council's annual "Voluntary Support of Education" survey.
Bigger Share for Wealthy Institutions

Large donations to the nation's wealthiest colleges accounted for much of the increase. The top 20 recipients (see table), which represent just 2 percent of the survey's respondents, raised more than a quarter of all the contributions.

"The top 20 historically have controlled a lot, and they're controlling a bigger and bigger share of private donations," said Ann E. Kaplan, the survey's director. "It's large gifts to large institutions that drive national trends."

Foundation giving is also playing an increasingly important role. Gifts from foundations increased by 19.7 percent, reaching $8.5-billion, with more than a third of that money coming from family foundations.

Gifts from family funds climbed by 31.5 percent between 2006 and 2007, according to a sampling of more than half the 1,023 institutions surveyed.

Alumni and other individual donors contributed just under half the total amount raised. But the percentage of alumni who made gifts dropped, continuing a decades-long trend. Over the past five years, however, alumni giving has increased by more than 25 percent.

Institutions of all types reported higher fund-raising totals. Liberal-arts colleges that responded to the survey saw a 9.8-percent increase in private support, raising $2.8-billion. Two-year colleges that replied raised a total of $250-million, up from $197-million in 2006.

The top 20 institutions in the survey raised $518-million more than they did in 2006, accounting for nearly 30 percent of total growth in private donations during the 2007 fiscal year, which ended June 30 at most colleges.

Top Universities

Stanford University raised the most of any institution, $832.3-million, followed by Harvard University ($614-million), the University of Southern California ($469.6-million), the Johns Hopkins University ($430.5-million), and Columbia University ($423.9-million).

Megagifts continue to reshape higher education. (See tables of charitable contributions to colleges in 2006-7, listed by state.) According to the report, 80 large contributions made in 2007 accounted for $2.2-billion.
Southern California’s donations increased 15.7 percent between 2006 and 2007, the most of any institution in the top 10, largely because of a $100-million foundation grant.

Ambitious campaigns continue to help many institutions thrive. Over the past five years, two large campaigns have helped Stanford’s fund-raising income grow by 83 percent. The university raised $1.1-billion in a campaign that ended in 2005. And it is partway through a five-year, $4.3-billion campaign for which it has raised more than $3-billion.

While Stanford is conducting the largest campaign of any college, more than two dozen other institutions have set a goal of raising more than $1-billion each.

As all that money has come in, some members of Congress have called for wealthy colleges and universities to distribute more of it to needy students. But, Ms. Kaplan said, federal lawmakers should look at the totals carefully before making any judgments.

"There’s been a lot in the news about higher education and all the wealth that resides there and the responsibilities of wealth," she said. "We’re not talking about most colleges. What is happening in the typical institution is different from what is happening in a handful of institutions."

**Looking Ahead**

Over all, though, private donations to the nation's colleges and universities continued a decade-long rise. From 1997 to 2007, the average annual increase in contributions has been 6.5 percent.

John Lippincott, president of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, commended colleges and universities for continuing that "nice upward trend," attributing it in part to an increase in the number of fund raisers.

"The single greatest predictor of fund-raising success is the number of times you ask," he said. "And the number of times you ask is in great part based on the frontline fund raisers you have to do the asking."

**Growth May Slow**

Despite the gains, Mr. Lippincott and other fund-raising experts are concerned that the good times may soon end.
The stock market has fallen sharply in recent months, and some observers fear the economy may be heading into a recession. Sharp fluctuations in the stock market and a decline in the gross domestic product can negatively affect capital giving and annual gifts to higher education.

"I think there is every reason to expect that when we look at this study a year from now, we would not see a 6.3-percent growth rate," Mr. Lippincott said. "I don't know if we will necessarily see an absolute decline, but I would not be surprised to see a slowing of the growth rate."

Robert F. Sharpe Jr., a fund-raising consultant who works with many colleges and universities, agreed. "If the market falls and people's wealth shrinks, then you start seeing a slowdown, or people postponing capital contributions," he said. "But the big donors, who drive these numbers anyway, tend to be stable."

The report is available for purchase at the council's Web site.

Conservatives Just Aren't Into Academe, Study Finds - Chronicle.com
02/20/2008 © The Chronicle of Higher Education

On Thursday mornings, a half-dozen faculty members from Pennsylvania State University's campus here gather at Kuppy's Diner to talk politics. Like most professors, all of those in the Kuppy's gang are Democrats — all except Matthew Woessner, an assistant professor of public policy.

During a recent Thursday-morning get-together over scrambled eggs and toast, the conversation at Kuppy's focused on the U.S. presidential election. As usual, Mr. Woessner's colleagues were taking shots at him. Why did he originally favor Rudy Giuliani? one of his colleagues wanted to know. "I really want to make sure I have a president who is going to bomb more countries," Mr. Woessner quipped.

It is the kind of over-the-top statement Mr. Woessner is famous for. The young professor relishes the role of conservative contrarian inside the liberal academy, a role that puts him in a distinct minority not only here but in higher education generally. But Mr. Woessner's candid conservatism also sets him squarely at odds with the findings of his own research, which suggests conservatives may just not be well suited to careers in academe.

That research — which Mr. Woessner completed with his wife, April Kelly-Woessner, an associate professor of political science at nearby Elizabethtown
College — is some of the first to take a hard, scientific look at the politics of the professoriate. The topic has excited fervent discussion and argument by anecdote, but very little empirical research.

"The idea that professors are liberal has been known since the 50s," says Solon J. Simmons, an assistant professor of conflict analysis and sociology at George Mason University, whose own recent study found that 90 percent of professors called themselves liberal or moderate. "But the Woessners actually have something new here. I think they are some of the first to do this kind of work."

The Woessners have peered into the psyche of conservative undergraduates to find out why so few of them want to earn Ph.D.'s and become professors. Their paper on the topic, "Left Pipeline: Why Conservatives Don't Get Doctorates," is available online and will be published as part of a book published in August by the American Enterprise Institute.

The Woessners found that liberal students have values and interests that point them to careers in academe, while most conservative students do not.

"The personal priorities of those on the left," the Woessners conclude, "are more compatible with pursuing a Ph.D."

Rush Limbaugh Junkie

Mr. Woessner acknowledges that his own career choice contradicts his research. He is a lifelong Republican who has been a Rush Limbaugh junkie and watches Fox News. But he says the prospect of a career in academe never seemed foreign.

"I knew academia had a liberal bias," says Mr. Woessner, who earned his Ph.D. in 2001 from Ohio State University. "But it was worth the risk."

Unlike most conservative students whom he and Ms. Kelly-Woessner have studied, he had a deep interest in the scientific method early on. "I used to come home from college and explain Einstein's theory of relativity to my brother and sister," he says.

David Horowitz, the conservative activist, has staged a national campaign for colleges to hire more conservative professors, and he tells stories about right-wing students who have been turned off by hostile leftists in the classroom. He even proposed an "academic bill of rights," which encourages colleges to foster a variety of political beliefs and become more intellectually diverse.

But Mr. Woessner says he never confronted intolerance in the classroom. Even some of his most liberal professors went out of their way to solicit his views.
In fact, Mr. Woessner gets along so well with Democrats that he married one. Ms. Kelly-Woessner teaches a course on women and politics, among others, at Elizabethtown College. She and Mr. Woessner didn't like each other at all when they first met at Ohio State. She even once told her future husband that she could never date a conservative. So when the couple announced their engagement, the director of their graduate program at Ohio State was stunned.

"They really were opposites," says Herbert F. Weisberg, chairman of the political-science department at Ohio State. "They were always debating each other."

The combination, however, turned out to be a boon to the Woessners' work. "Our research is a byproduct of the way Matthew and I interact," says Ms. Kelly-Woessner, who is chairwoman of her department at Elizabethtown. "We disagree, and we know there is only one way to find out which one of us is right and which one is wrong: empirical research."

The couple started studying the politics of the professoriate after September 11, 2001, when they noticed their classrooms becoming more politically charged. "You were on one side or the other after that, and everyone either loved Bush or hated him," says Ms. Kelly-Woessner. "You had to wonder how students were responding when you talked about Bush in the classroom."

The Woessners were surprised to learn that while there had been a lot of debate about politics in the classroom, not much empirical research had been done. "There are questions here, but they're getting lost in the bickering and the political debate," says Ms. Kelly-Woessner.

To find out how students reacted when professors expressed political views, the Woessners distributed questionnaires in 2004 to 1,385 undergraduates in political-science courses at 29 colleges and universities. They asked the students to indicate whether they thought their professors were conservative, moderate, or liberal. And they asked students about the quality of classroom teaching.

What they found was that students who believed their professors had the same politics they did rated a course more highly than students who didn't. The Woessners also found that students were less interested in a course when they believed their professors' political views clashed with their own.

They published their findings in a paper called "My Professor Is a Partisan Hack: How Perceptions of Professors' Political Views Affect Student Course Evaluations," in the July 2006 issue of the American Political Science Association's journal *PS: Political Science & Politics.*
They completed their study just as the Pennsylvania legislature held hearings on Mr. Horowitz's academic bill of rights in the spring of 2006. Mr. Woessner was watching the hearings at home on television when he heard someone testify that politics does not affect classroom learning. So he called up the legislative panel and told an aide that research he and his wife had completed showed just the opposite. The panel asked the Woessners to testify.

Since their research showed that students were turned off when professors expressed views that were contrary to their own, the Woessners told lawmakers that professors should do their best to present both sides of a political argument and tread lightly when it comes to expressing their own views.

Ms. Kelly-Woessner follows that advice. "My students don't know what I am," she says. "I don't tell them how I vote."

But Mr. Woessner's students know he is a conservative, and he says it would be irresponsible for him to remain "politically invisible" on the Penn State campus here. If he did, "all students would hear is left-wing voices," he says. So Mr. Woessner often appears as the lone conservative in university-sponsored policy debates. And he doesn't hide his allegiances on his Web site, which includes photos of him at the 2001 inauguration of President Bush and of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas holding the Woessners' young son. But in his classroom, he says, he is careful to encourage students whether they agree with him or not.

**Even-Handed Research**

His colleagues predict Mr. Woessner will have an easy time earning tenure later this academic year, and agree he does a good job of balancing his political views. He is even the faculty adviser to both the College Republicans and the College Democrats. Each December, Mr. Woessner takes a group of students to Washington, to meet with Supreme Court justices and watch the court deliberate.

The evenhandedness of the Woessners' research caught the attention of Robert Maranto, an associate professor of political science at Villanova University who is editing a book for AEI Press to be called "The Politically Correct University." "Their work doesn't fit neatly into either camp," says Mr. Maranto. "It's just good, empirical research."

Mr. Maranto asked the Woessners to contribute a chapter to his book on why conservatives don't pursue doctorates. Typically, he says, there are a few answers to the question. Liberals say conservatives want to make more money than professors earn, while conservatives argue that they get less encouragement from professors than liberal students do. What the Woessners found, though, is
that those are not the only reasons. They looked at a 2004 survey of 15,569 college seniors completed by the University of California at Los Angeles's Higher Education Research Institute. That research showed that while liberal students were more likely than conservative students to have contact with professors outside the classroom and to do research with them, the difference was not enough to explain why so many more liberal students wanted to pursue Ph.D's.

Instead the Woessners looked at differences in interests and personality. They found that in a variety of ways, conservative students were less interested than liberals in subject matter that often leads to doctoral degrees, and less interested in doing the kinds of things that professors spend their time doing.

For example, liberal students reported valuing intellectual freedom, creativity, and the chance to write original work and make a theoretical contribution to science. They outnumbered conservative students two to one in the humanities and social sciences — which are among the fields most likely to produce interest in doctoral study. Conservative students, however, put more value on personal achievement and orderliness, and on practical professions, like accounting and computer science, that could earn them lots of money.

The Woessners also found that conservative students put a higher priority than liberal ones on raising a family. That does not always fit well with a career in academe, where people often delay childbearing until after they earn tenure.

The research led the Woessners to conclude that if higher education wants to attract more conservatives to the professoriate, it should smooth the way financially, offering subsidized health insurance and housing for graduate students, and adopting family-friendly policies for professors.

But Mr. Simmons, the assistant professor at George Mason, says that if the Woessners are right, there may not be an easy solution to the political imbalance in academe. "If it's true that people are self-sorting," he says, "what is to be done?"

**A Bipartisan Household**

Completing research on the politics of the professoriate has made the Woessners even more attuned to their own views. While their observations are not exactly empirical, both spouses have noticed that running a bipartisan household has had a moderating effect on them both.

Since Mr. Woessner met his wife, he's voted for a Democrat for the first time and given up Rush Limbaugh, who Ms. Kelly-Woessner thought was just plain
Meanwhile, she tolerates Fox News, which they typically record and watch after their two preschool-aged children are asleep.

But while the Woessners have come together in some ways, differences remain. And, as usual, they find that's good for their research. Right now they are trying to answer a question that has been debated nationwide: Do professors indoctrinate students by expressing a political ideology in the classroom? The Woessners surveyed 69 political-science classes in the fall of 2006 and again in the spring of 2007 and asked 1,603 students about their ideology at the beginning and at the end of each course.

Mr. Woessner tends to think students are susceptible to professors' political views and change their opinions, while Ms. Kelly-Woessner thinks college students are fairly set in their own views.

"We're running the data right now," says Mr. Woessner, "and we'll soon know which one of us is right."

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Ivy Group's Leader, Jeff Orleans, to Retire Next Year After 25 Years of Service - Chronicle.com
02/20/2008 © The Chronicle of Higher Education

The executive director of the Ivy League's athletic conference has announced that he will retire next year after 25 years at the helm.

Jeffrey H. Orleans will step down on June 30, 2009, from the Council of Ivy Group Presidents, known informally as the Ivy Group. A search for his successor will begin in the fall.

In an interview on Tuesday, Mr. Orleans, who is 61, said he was proud of his work shaping the council into a group whose teams consistently perform well and maintain high academic standards.

But he predicted that future years would bring ever more demands on college athletes, and that balancing those demands would become increasingly difficult.

"The days stay at 24 hours, and the expectations we have for our athletes keep growing," Mr. Orleans said. Athletics, academic activities, community involvement, internships, study-abroad programs—all are vital parts of a college education that must be squeezed in, he said.
But rarely is that hard-to-strike balance mentioned in broader discussions about college sports, he said.

"The stuff that gets the headlines," he said, "is usually, Should we have a 1-A [football] playoff? or Should we expand the men's and women's basketball tournaments?" The real question, he said, is, "What's the individual athlete's life going to be like?"

A graduate of Yale University and Yale Law School, Mr. Orleans was a civil-rights lawyer with the federal government for four years before joining the University of North Carolina system, where he remained for nine years as assistant to the president. In 1984, he became the Ivy Group's first full-time executive director.

During his stint with the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare's civil-rights division, Mr. Orleans was a principal author of the regulations for carrying out Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the law that bars sex discrimination at institutions that receive federal funds.

"I was very lucky to have a chance to be involved with Title IX," he said on Tuesday. "And I'm very proud with what we have done in building what I think are very strong programs for women."

But more than 35 years after the passage of Title IX, Mr. Orleans said he was frustrated by the "adversarial" nature of public discourse over the law. He said the federal government, under both Democrats and Republicans, had shied away from enforcing it—and in doing so, has left room for an acrimonious debate to take over.

"There's no real reason why we can't have very full opportunities for men and women ... and still have a wide variety of sports, and not have to choose between football and wrestling," he said.

"If we'd had some examples early of the government trying to work with schools, there would have been room to experiment and try and find solutions." he said. "Instead, the government backed away, women's groups felt they had to file lawsuits against recalcitrant folks, and it became adversarial."

In addition to his work for the Ivy Group, Mr. Orleans has also served on the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Division I Management Council and on the executive board of the National Association of College and University Attorneys.
Once he leaves, Mr. Orleans won't be far in spirit from the Ivy Group office, in Princeton, N.J.

In addition to staying connected with the Ivy Group in some fashion, Mr. Orleans says he may consult, or teach and write about subjects that interest him in college athletics and beyond. Some of that writing will include a family history: He and his wife, Tracy, have relatives hailing from more than a half-dozen different countries.

Before leaving the Ivy Group office, Mr. Orleans said he aims to swipe T-shirts from each of the Ivy League institutions so he can continue to cheer for their teams, and will purchase several new pairs of blue jeans to accompany the shirts.

As for his trademark bow tie? He'll still wear one, but only when the occasion calls for it, he said.

Thai Prime Minister Stirs Outrage With Denials of 1976 Massacre of Students - Chronicle.com
02/20/2008 © The Chronicle of Higher Education

Thailand's new prime minister, who recently stirred outrage by denying that 46 people had died in a violent crackdown on university students and other pro-democracy protesters in 1976, went before parliament on Monday to swear he had not been involved in the incident.

The prime minister, Samak Sundaravej, was Thailand's deputy interior minister at the time of the bloody assault on Thammasat University.

"If I am not telling the truth, may I face destruction and ill fortune for the rest of my life," Mr. Samak said in the parliament on Monday. "But if I am telling the truth, may success and good fortune come my way."

Those comments came on the heels of recent remarks to CNN in which Mr. Samak asserted that there had been no massacre at Thammasat University, in Bangkok, three decades ago.

Mr. Samak has stated his innocence before, but his latest comments marked the first time he publicly asserted that the shooting and hanging of at least 46 students never took place.
"No," answered Mr. Samak when a CNN interviewer asked him about the official death toll. "For me, no deaths, one unlucky guy being beaten and being burned."

A government report issued after the killings found that at least 46 people had died and 3,000 had been arrested. Witnesses and human-rights groups say that hundreds of people were murdered but that families fearing retaliation by the government did not report the deaths.

In the 1970s, Mr. Samak was actively involved in fueling anti-Communist rhetoric. As host of an army radio program, he accused students, who were protesting the return of a military dictator, of being Communists who were trying to smash Thailand's revered monarchy.

On October 6, 1976, after rumors had spread that student activists and other protesters at Thammasat University had insulted the crown prince, heavily armed paramilitary groups and police officers started shooting and lobbing grenades at students on the campus. After Bangkok's mayor issued a free-fire order, the troops stormed the university.

According to Paul M. Handley's book, *The King Never Smiles: A Biography of Thailand's Bhumibol Adulyadej* (*The Chronicle*, February 8, 2006), students who tried to escape by jumping into the river were shot by Navy gunships. Photographs show the bodies of victims who had been hanged from trees and set on fire.

Academics and former students who survived the massacre said Mr. Samak's version of history was dangerous.

Kongjeth Promnumpol, chairman of Relatives of the October Heroes group, told the *Bangkok Post* that they don't actually expect the prime minister to apologize.

"We just want Thai society not to forget that a brutal massacre was committed against unarmed and innocent students, and democracy lovers, by those who were afraid of losing power through democratization," he said.