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Federal cutbacks threaten higher ed

Aid, loans face axe

By GABRIEL BOEHMER
Of the Emerald

Proposed cutbacks in federal funding for student financial aid programs could prevent as many as one million students from returning to colleges and universities next fall, according to higher education lobbyists.

"It's kind of nightmareish," says American Student Association President Tom Duffy.

Even though the Congress has yet to finalize its financial aid reductions, the uncertainty of financial aid awards may stop as many as 750,000 students from entering school, Duffy says.

An enrollment reduction of that magnitude could bankrupt higher education, according to Duffy.

"Many schools are just balancing their budgets now," Duffy says. "Any reductions in students would be devastating."

But he also fears the worst is yet to come.

The first wave of budget cutting trimmed the fat off higher education, Duffy says. The next wave will begin to wipe out essential programs in higher education, he says.

Still, the echos of doom for higher education programs often overlook the more important victim — the student, Duffy says.

Restricting students' access to higher education through financial aid cutbacks will take its toll several years from now when there is a shortage of college and university graduates, he says.



Photo by Erich Boekelheide

But Duffy says organized student resistance could dull the budget axe.

Unfortunately, that's not happening, he says.

"A lot of students would get involved if they knew what was happening."

The drawn-out budgetary debate has confused many students and left them in cold, Duffys says.

Duffy says the

write-your-congressman approach is an effective way for students to throw their weight around in the nation's capital. But he also suggests a personal approach that prevents students from sounding like they all copied the same bland form letter.

"Letters really make a difference. Make them short and to the point."

And the most important thing

is to request a reply, Duffy says.

"You tie up the whole administrative machinery that way."

Without an organized student movement, higher education lobbyists don't have a prayer, Duffy says.

"We can talk 'till we're blue in the faces here in Washington, and Congress won't listen to anyone except the voters."

"Students' greatest strength is in their numbers."

NCC stays in the black

Meanwhile, next door at Northwest Christian College, they're getting by.

"We're not in as much trouble as some private colleges because we own our campus," says NCC Pres. William Hays. "We're not making payments on our buildings, so we don't have to raise large funds for that."

"All we have to do is raise our budget."

Annually, that's \$7,500 per student, he says, and NCC has 239 of them. Students pay \$3,500 in tuition, with another \$1,000 chipped in by private financial aid sources.

The other \$3,000 must be raised as donations, which come from many sources: direct solicitation, fund-raising dinners and wills.

"By the time you put all of those sources together, it's touch-and-go," Hays says. "We're just about able to stay in the black."

Students who can't afford the stiff tuition have many of the same financial aid options as University students, says Donna Vaughn of the NCC financial aid office. National Direct Student Loans, Guaranteed Student Loans, work study, supplemental Oregon grants and VA loans are all offered.

"We (also) have some endowed funds and one special trust that favors NCC students over other colleges," Vaughn says.

Students at NCC also attend classes at the University, since the school offers only one major — biblical and liberal arts

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Offices handle sexual harassment

By ANN PORTAL
Of the Emerald

Sexual harassment infects the University to the same extent that it does in the rest of the country, University affirmative action director Bean McFaaden said Tuesday.

Students can suffer emotionally from sexual harassment, lose educational opportunities and even to drop out of school, McFadden said.

The University considers any "unsolicited, non-reciprocal" sexual behavior as sexual harassment, said ASUO executive coordinator and student advocacy director JoAnn Een.

Rape Crisis Network member Lisa Miller said there are no specific persons targeted for harassment — it can happen to all women.

Sexual harassment may be sexist remarks, repeated requests for dates or demands for sexual intercourse. It may be a professor who portrays women — or men — unfavorably in class. It may be rape.

Sexual harassment may be a single encounter or a series of encounters, said Een, and it doesn't need to be a professor or supervisor for the student to take action — workers and students also are covered under University grievance procedures.

Students do have access to a number of ways to deal with the problem, McFadden said.

The first step is to immediately speak out against the unwanted action. Besides building a good legal base for a lawsuit, a rebuff may solve the problem, she said.

Don't give the harasser the opportunity to say, "Gee, I thought you liked it," McFadden advised.

And don't get off the track. Let the person know

"Don't give the harasser the opportunity to say, 'Gee, I thought you liked it.'"

the behavior is unacceptable and unsuitable the first time it occurs.

Also important is the documentation of each incident, McFadden said. Although many cases now are working their way through the courts, the standard of evidence is still very high. Witnesses, memos, tape recordings and journals are useful as trial evidence and also can provide the victim with a sanity check when the going gets rough, she said.

When a student needs assistance, it is available at the University and on state and federal levels.

The affirmative action office handles all forms of official sexual harassment complaints. All protests are confidential, and no action is taken without first consulting the filer, McFadden said.

Een's office counsels students on all types of problems, including harassment. Students can talk confidentially with Een and she can refer students who need further help to the appropriate agency.

Een said it is important for students to realize they can talk to someone without any formal action being taken.

"We can help you indirectly, too," she said.

The state higher education board also hears harassment complaints, if the student is unsatisfied with University action.

At the federal level, Title IX prohibits sexual discrimination, but the extent to which that act covers harassment suits is not yet clear.

Students also should consider how much time and money they are willing to invest prosecuting their case, McFadden said. There are long delays in most formal processes, she added.

But "don't be overwhelmed," Een said.

"Pursue it — there are people that are going to help you."