

Teaching an old education system new tricks

Candidates promise reform for struggling students and schools

By JEREMY STONE WEBER
The BG News, Bowling Green U.

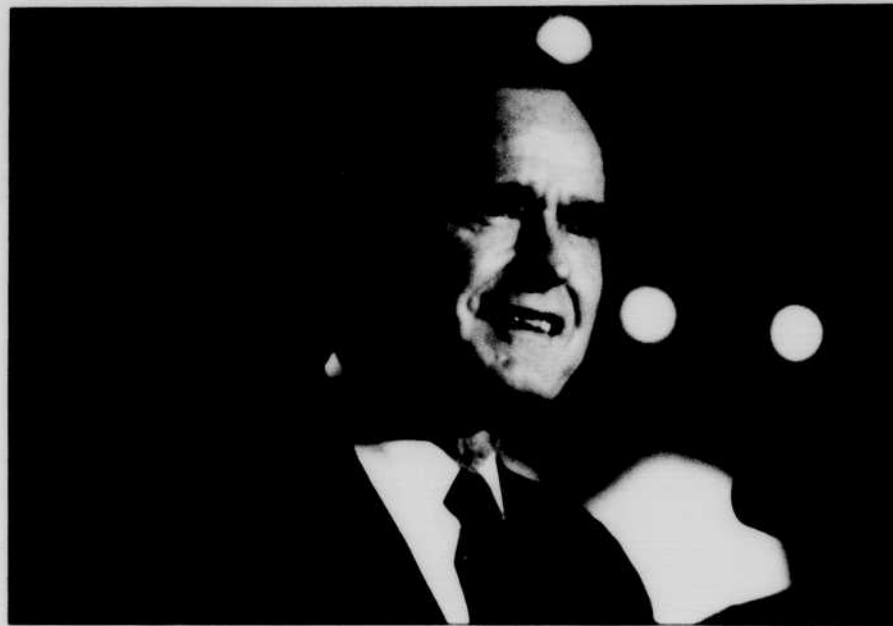
With higher education playing a pivotal role in the 1992 election, candidates are introducing a variety of policies aimed at making college affordable and accessible to everyone.

The College Vote '92

Jerry Brown

Policy: The former California governor is running on his record, stressing that student aid increased by more than \$50 million during his two terms. He has called for more scholarships and grants as opposed to loans. He also wants to forgive loan debt for students who served in the Gulf War and increase college professors' pay.

Problem: Brown offers no specifics on how to improve either access to education or the education itself. His call to improve racial and socioeconomic balance in universities is vague also.



COURTESY OF THE WHITE HOUSE

He crowned himself "The Education President." Now, what is he planning to do about it?

Bill Clinton

Policy: Clinton is calling for a national college trust fund, which would virtually guarantee money for any student who needs it. Under the Arkansas governor's plan, students would be able to get a loan through the fund, paid for by tax money. After

graduation, students would pay back the loan after finding a job or by performing two years of community service.

Problem: It's expensive. The final cost is likely to be in the billions of dollars, not exactly pocket change. The nation's budget can ill afford the cost.

Pat Buchanan

Policy: Buchanan has all but ignored the education issue in his campaign, delivering no proposals on how to improve funding for either student aid or academic programs. He has sharply criticized what he calls the "education establishment," and calls for less tenure security for professors to increase their incentive to teach well.

Problem: His "do more with less" call rings hollow for colleges operating on bare-bones budgets. Education leaders say less tenure security would produce fewer competent, dedicated teachers, the opposite of the desired effect.

George Bush

Policy: Bush makes no mention of how he plans to change higher education in his "America 2000" plan. He does, however, propose increasing the number of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in math, science and engineering programs. The president's plan also calls for increasing the number of students, especially minorities, who complete at least two years of college.

Problem: The plan is short of specifics and long on cost, about \$850 million. What few details Bush does offer involve increasing funding to existing programs, not changing the programs or creating new ones.

Bold, brash Brown takes a nontraditional approach to politics

By JULIE COLLINS
The University Daily, Texas Tech U.

Political pundits said Jerry Brown's image as "Governor Moonbeam" would be an albatross around his neck.

College students, however, are overlooking the albatross and zeroing in on his trademark turtleneck, a symbol of his nontraditional approach to politics.

Brown often is brash, sometimes attacking his own party members. But his style appeals to students who like his gutsy approach of challenging the status quo.

"Brown is running an attack-all campaign that taps into the alienation many college students feel toward the current system of government dealing with the tight economic situation we are facing at this point," said Ken Cosgrove, an assistant professor of political science at Texas Tech U.

Cosgrove said Brown offers an environmental message to the public that especially grabs the attention of college students.

Brown's primary wins in Colorado, Connecticut, Maine, Nevada and Vermont have further fueled the debate that million dollar election campaigns that exclude the majority of Americans do not always work as well as expected.

Brown's "We the People" campaign refuses to accept donations of more than \$100.



MARK HEILEMANN
THE EDINBURGH, MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE

Making the grade, budget cuts and all

By EILEEN C. IDZIK
The Spectrum, State U. of New York, Buffalo

In the wake of drastic budget cuts at many of the country's public universities, students are using the election year to encourage the federal government to place a higher priority on education funding.

"Obviously, education should be the first thing the country should look upon," said Andrew Baranich, a sophomore at Ohio State U. "That's the thing that is going to lead the country in the right direction and should be a focus in the presidential campaign."

Rutgers U. junior Charlene Williams attributes much of education's budget problems to the federal government. "During the Reagan years, everything was cut," Williams said. "Bush followed this plan." Furthermore, she said, none of the candidates are really addressing higher education issues.

While students are pushing for more action from the federal government, the majority of funding for higher education is the burden of the states. According to the U.S. Department of Education, state governments contributed 27.5 percent of the direct expenditures to public and private universities in the 1991-92 academic year.

Federal agencies contributed 12.3 percent, not including federally supported student aid and research grants. The candidates are saying, however, that they are not going to make Bush's mistakes. Bill Clinton criticized George Bush's education policies earlier this year at a Democratic Presidential Forum in Buffalo. "The education bills Bush so warmly embraced he so quickly forgot."

But funding for education is one thing students won't forget easily.

"We supposedly have the 'education president,' but he hasn't done anything for education," said Rick Cole, student association president at the State U. of New York, Buffalo. "It is so easy to get money for defense, but trying to get money for education is impossible."

"The message students are getting from the federal government is not a strong, positive one," Cole added. "It's just talk. I think education should be a federal priority."

SUNY students have already gotten the attention of the



ROB CHEER, THE AUBURN PLAINSMAN, AUBURN U.

Budget cuts have made crowded classes a way of life.

state government by lobbying the legislature and the Board of Trustees. Cole said students also wrote to their assemblymen about "how valuable education is."

The SUNY and the U. of California systems have been two of the hardest hit by budget cuts. SUNY Chancellor D. Bruce Johnstone said Gov. Mario Cuomo has proposed a \$143 million cut to the SUNY system.

Half of this 15 percent decrease in state support will be made up in tuition increases, and the rest will be taken from individual campus budgets and SUNY Central Administration, Johnstone said.

The UC system is faring only slightly better than SUNY. Last year, as part of an eight-point plan to cover a \$312 million budget shortfall, UC absorbed \$20 million in undesignated cuts, cut maintenance by 40 percent and cut teaching equipment by 33 percent, said Michael Lassiter, the UC system's director of communication services.

Next year there will be a \$550 million increase in student fees, an increase of more than 20 percent.

The UC Board of Regents adopted a budget for next year which provides \$31 million more than this year, an increase of 1.5 percent.