

Senator finds Pell grant scam



WASHINGTON (AP) — More than 4,000 students have collected Pell grants for 11 years or more, and in one case a student got the federal money for 19 years, Sen. Sam Nunn said Wednesday.

The Education Department discovered the long-term tuition subsidies for 4,095 students when it examined its files to answer a series of questions Nunn had posed as part of a probe by the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

"I am not surprised by this revelation," Nunn, D-Ga., said in a statement. "The Department of Education has been managed so poorly in the past that it did not even know this apparent abuse had been occurring."

The disclosure came as Nunn announced hearings for next Wednesday and Thursday on problems in the program. Pell grants make up the government's largest cash aid plan for students in post-secondary education.

Some 3.8 million of America's neediest students received an average of \$1,763 each last year in Pell grants at 6,300 eligible schools.

David Longanecker, assistant secretary for post-secondary education, said federal policy on how long students can receive Pell grants has changed several times over the years.

He said it is not currently illegal for grants to be extended well beyond the normal four-year span of a conventional undergraduate college education.

But Nunn made it clear he believes the program is out of control.

Committee investigators have discovered schools that exist only to milk the program for federal subsidies, he said. Some schools apparently pay students kickbacks to attend classes and let their names be used on grant applications. Other schools routinely falsify records to win grants for ineligible students, Nunn said.

On Monday, the department mailed notices informing 21 orthodox Jewish schools that they were being barred from Pell grants and other federal student aid programs because their programs did not provide training aimed at job goals. All but one of the schools are in the New York City area.

Longanecker said the Jewish academies were trying to "rip off" taxpayers to finance their operations.

A dozen or more other schools that also offer programs in Judaic studies are under investigation by the department and more enforcement actions may follow, he said.

A federal grand jury in New York also is investigating several dozen Hasidic Jewish schools and other institutions over alleged abuses in the \$6.7 billion Pell Grant program.

NAACP complaint resolved by AT&T

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — The North Carolina chapter of the NAACP resolved its fight with AT&T over an offending cartoon in the phone company's employee magazine.

The state chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is restoring long distance service with American Telephone & Telegraph Co., chapter President Kelly Alexander Jr. said in a statement Tuesday.

Alexander cited "AT&T's long-standing, mutually respectful relationship with the NAACP."

However, a spokeswoman at national NAACP headquarters in Baltimore said Wednesday that no agreement had been made at the national level.

The chapter complained to AT&T last month about a drawing in a company magazine sent to 300,000 employees worldwide in September.

The drawing showed characters on several continents talking by telephone. All the characters were human except the one in Africa, which was a monkey.

The state group decried the drawing as insensitive and announced plans to stop doing business with AT&T. The phone company said it was equally appalled and issued an apology.

The company said the outside design firm that submitted the drawing no longer employs the freelance artist who drew the cartoon, and it has dismissed one of its production managers.

The complaint also prompted a meeting among national NAACP Chairman William Gibson, executive director Benjamin Chavis and AT&T Chairman Robert Allen. The meeting concerned recruiting minorities, scholarships for black students, procurement and promotion goals for the company and the use of black financial institutions. While no agreements were announced, they agreed to continue talking.

AT&T spokesman Walter Murphy said Wednesday that the loss of the North Carolina NAACP's long distance business was "especially painful."

Murphy also said, "We're glad to hear that the NAACP felt that Bob Allen's meeting with the NAACP leaders was fruitful and that they understood how concerned we were about what happened."

Winter foretold by worm's color

BEATTYVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Appalachia is in for a mild winter with a cold snap at both ends. That is, if the eastern Kentucky woolly worm can be trusted.

The woolly worm lady, Rosemary Kilduff, released her 12th annual weather survey Wednesday.

Appalachian folklore holds that winter's severity can be foretold from the color of the

Isabella moth caterpillar's "wool."

Kilduff and her spotters counted 393 worms in Lee County this year. There were 111 solid black worms, indicating the frosty start and finish of winter. Kilduff said a bunch of lighter caterpillars portend a mild middle.

"With 36 light-colored ones, particularly the lime- and celery-colored ones, we will cer-

tainly see grass in February as we did last year," she said.

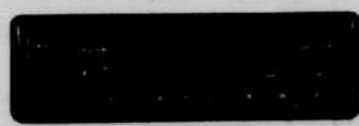
Kilduff acknowledges that the worms sometimes "mess up a little." But she said the inaccuracies can be blamed on such things as a 1991 volcanic eruption in the Philippines and unusual Pacific Ocean warming known as El Nino.

"That confused the meteorologists," Kilduff said. "So what's a woolly worm to do?"

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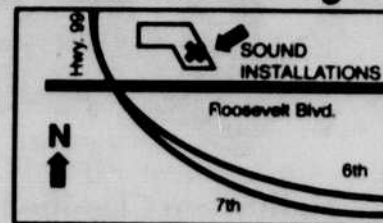


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