

SCORE!

Arizona State U. — Looks like the Lucky Duck of the Year award goes to Arizona State U.'s students.

Short Takes

Not only do they get to host Super Bowl XXX in nearby Tempe, Ariz., but they also get two days' off from classes. Sure, there'll be tens of thousands of people flooding the town, but c'mon. Mail carriers can do their job in rain, sleet and snow, and ASU can't even deal with drunken 49ers fans?

IN THE RUNNING FOR EXTRA CREDIT

Louisiana State U. — When Louisiana State U. senior Matthew Joseph was 12, he decided he wanted to run for office. So it was probably fate that at 25, when he couldn't get an internship with a gubernatorial candidate to fulfill a political science requirement, he decided to run on his own platform.

"I think I'll pull a percentage of the vote," he says. "There are people in my generation in Louisiana who are working for McDonald's — and they're frustrated. I think they'll want someone who didn't have a political background. Someone who hasn't been in any scandals."

His platform is pretty simple: Get people educated and Louisiana will be a better place. "If cuts are needed, [they're] taken from the universities," he says. "Higher education should be considered standard."

CONSOLATION PRIZE

St. John Fisher College, Rochester, N.Y. — Appliance stores offer rebates. Car dealerships offer warranties. Even cheesy infomercials promise to refund your money if you're not satisfied with a product. Shouldn't there be some sort of guarantee on your education? Well, now there is. At one school, at least. Sort of. St. John Fisher College is offering to pay students \$417 per month, up to \$5,000, if they aren't offered a job that requires a college degree within six months of their graduation. But students must meet a strict set of guidelines: They must complete a job-related internship, map out career goals with an academic adviser and graduate with at least a 2.75 GPA. After graduation, students must provide documented proof that they're trying to find work. Still, for the slacker who enjoys a real challenge, this could be a sweet little deal. Properly scammed, you could net a six-month postgraduate vacation.

In the search for innovative funding ideas, the Florida board of regents has submitted a privatization plan for the state university system — effectively opening a Pandora's box of financial, ethical and academic dilemmas.

Under the board's proposal, all 10 of Florida's public universities would operate as one private, nonprofit corporation. The proposal is in response to a request from Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Miami), the chair of the Florida State Senate Ways and Means committee, to decrease state funding by 25 percent.

"From the regents' perspective, a cut like that would have meant closing down five-and-a-half of our state universities," says James Heekin, Jr., vice chair of regents. "I don't think that's what they had in mind."

In addition to increasing outside funding from private corporations and federal grants, tuition hikes are inevitable, administrators say. In-state students at Florida state schools have approximately 75 percent of their tuition paid for with state money. Threatened with losing most of their state funding — because state funds would be cut or turned to private funds — students will have to seek other sources for tuition money.

If Florida's universities are privatized, they will be able to set their own rates and maybe even increase fees for the more expensive programs: engineering, computers, film, etc. "Students who want to go to the premier universities in Florida ought to pay more," says regent Welton Watson.

Students have voiced concern about the impact privatization will have on tuition and diversity.

"If you look at other schools that are private nonprofits, the tuition is pretty high," says Becky Malone, a U. of West Florida sophomore. "I worry that my parents won't be able to send my brother and sister to school."

U. of North Florida freshman Keesha Jackson hopes the legislature will look at the proposal's effect on minorities. "All I

know is that I wouldn't be here... without financial aid," she says. "I think the plan will hurt minorities because we're not the richest people."

The issue is hitting campuses just in time for student government elections. Finally, student government candidates will have an important platform on which to run, if they seize the opportunity.

■ Amy Zukeran, Florida Flambeau, Florida State U.



Banner Yet Waves

Tom Carter and Paul Pimentel enrolled at American U. to study politics. By February, the two were embroiled in a fiery debate involving slanderous personal attacks and accusations of coercion, threats and denial of rights.

Sounds like Washington, all right.

As representatives in the university's General Assembly, Carter and Pimentel learned a better lesson than any ever taught in the classroom. They clashed over a resolution proposed by Carter: to display the American flag during and voluntarily recite the pledge of allegiance at the beginning of General Assembly meetings.

Although 90 percent of the assembly agreed to co-sponsor the bill when it was proposed, it was tabled for further review.

"We should have the right to honor the flag and country," declares Carter, a junior. "We're the American University. We were chartered by an act of Congress. Our [school] seal reads, 'for God and country.'"

Citing a large international student population — nearly 25 percent —

Pimentel, a senior, led the opposition. "We [General Assembly members] shouldn't be identifying ourselves with, or even promoting, any monocultural symbol. If my whole constituency was made up of American students, I would have had no problem. [But] international students came here to study American government, not pledge allegiance to it."

Pimentel says he gathered more than 700 student signatures to petition the resolution, a petition Carter claims never existed. In turn, Pimentel accused Carter of using the issue and the GA to propel his name into the conservative Republican limelight.

Senior Jim O'Brien, who co-sponsored the resolution, was surprised to see how out-of-hand the issue became. "It seemed like an innocent enough bill," he says.

In mid-February, after another long debate, the General Assembly voted to pass the resolution by a margin of 18-15. Carter was pleased his bill went through but was surprised that it only squeaked by.

O'Brien noted the coming campus elections. "I think when it became such a heated issue and took on the partisan tone... people just didn't want to have anything to do with it. That's the typical skill that's learned in Washington. As soon as any position becomes the least bit controversial, you turn and run the other direction."

■ Robert Moll, Syracuse U.



Throughout a heated debate, Tom Carter kept his eye on the grand old flag.