

For Mercy's Sake

ATENTION PROFESSORS. ATTENTION ALL PROFESSORS. Mercy College is having a midnight madness clearance sale. Enroll and retain a few students, get a raise. But hurry — students are going fast.

It sounds like bargain basement tactics, but administrators at Mercy College, N.Y., are serious about their offer: More students at the college means higher salaries for faculty. Fewer students, however, means a salary cut.

Last spring, when state and federal funding for financial aid was reduced by about \$2.2 million, the school had to make up for the loss.

Administrators feared that if they couldn't, they would have to eliminate approximately 70 administrative positions. Instead, Benjamin Weisman, chair of the business and economics department, proposed that the university determine salaries according to admission and retention goals. Depending on enrollment figures, faculty salaries could be cut or increased by as much as 7 percent.

According to Weisman, 85 percent of the faculty voted for the plan, but some worry about the impact it might have on the quality of higher education.

John DiElsi, director of academic computing, says the plan will encourage grade inflation. If professors are rewarded for retaining students, the temptation to give higher grades to keep students will increase, he says.

Weisman counters: "The plan is not about the faculty actively recruiting students. They don't work on a commission basis."

DiElsi's primary argument against the plan is that it shifts the focus away from academics and toward the business of running the school.

"Faculty shouldn't have to think about bringing in students," DiElsi says. "Faculty should think about



providing the proper educational atmosphere for the students that admissions brings in."

As the only school in the country with such a plan, Mercy College is sure to be monitored carefully by other schools, says Joy Colelli, dean of admissions at Mercy. With 500

more applications than last year, the faculty is expecting a 7 percent raise — but only final enrollment figures will tell.

Karin Davidson, Bucknell U., Pennsylvania/
Illustration by Chad Mansfield,
Colorado State U.



Hold thy tongue

After almost 10 months of academic turmoil, Brian Evenson, author of the controversial book *Altmann's Tongue*, took a one-year leave of absence from Brigham Young U. to work in the English department of Oklahoma State U. this year.

Administrators at BYU, which is owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and operated in accordance with the Church's standards, questioned whether the book violated the school's honor code.

At the time concerns were raised, president Rex Lee and provost Bruce Hafen met with Evenson to discuss his upcoming third-year tenure review and how the controversial book might affect the outcome.

"If his future work follows the same pattern of, for example, extreme sadism, brutality and gross degradation of women characteristic of *Altmann's Tongue*, such a publication would, in our view, not further his cause as a candidate for continuing faculty status," Lee wrote in a memo after the meeting.

The book of short stories has been deemed "brilliant" by his editor at A. A. Knopf Publishing and "a showcase of graphic, disgusting, pointless violence" in an anonymous letter written by a student to a member of the board of trustees.

But Evenson defends the violence in his book.

"[I wrote the book to] work against this kind of violence-for-pleasure phenomenon that I think our society is caught up in," Evenson says.

Although some students back Evenson, others like Ryan Nelson, a senior who took critical interpretive writing from Evenson, sees the controversy in a different light.

"If we have to choose between academic freedom and support of the Church, then I think we have a duty to support the Church's standards if the two are in conflict," Nelson says.

For Evenson, the choice between his position at BYU and his work is clear.

"There are a lot of things that make me want to stay," he says. "But at the same time, the freedom for me to write [the way I'd like to write] seems to be something that will be denied to me here, and that for me is the most important thing."

Shea Nuttall, Brigham Young U.

Byte me

Students Study Webonomics

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR HOME PAGE CREATION and programming. Ah, no. Programmer and designer in chief. Ick. How about Webmaster? Mmmm, now there's a job title — a bit pretentious, but it's got moxie....

When you start free-lancing, you've got to have a title. And it seems that the new breed of designers on the World-Wide Web is going for the direct approach. So, Webmaster it is.



Web junkies got dollar signs in their eyes when Brian Pinkerton, a grad student at U. of Washington, became an instant millionaire by selling WebCrawler — the sophisticated search engine he created — to online giant America Online.

AOL isn't the only mega-company seeking out student Websters. Huge companies like Hitachi and AT&T are scouting for college Web enthusiasts to create their Web sites — the new-age corporate business cards, *plus*.

"Students seem to know a lot about the Web because they're the ones who have the time to play around on it and learn how to use it," says Jeremy Hylton, a grad student and Web designer at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Students are doing more than just playing around — they're turning their websessions into jobs.

"I started off doing my own home page, which is the way a lot of people start out," says Thomas Karlo, a junior at MIT. Karlo's home-page mastery has earned him Web gigs with NewMarket Ventures, a Boston-based computer company, and National Public Radio's *Car Talk*.

Hylton now earns an hourly wage — most Webmasters currently make \$10 to \$65 an hour, depending on their experience and the complexity of the project — and is working on the upcoming Columbia House site.

One of our very own Webmasters, Cabel Sasser (no, of course this isn't a sly plug for the U. Web site at <http://www.umagazine.com>), is making his mark on the Web. After his personal home page was awarded Cool Site of the Day in April, 1995, Sasser started getting calls from companies looking for a Web designer. His hit list now includes sites for Fox Television, KHS-FM radio and the city of Los Angeles.

"The thing about the Internet is that it's so easily accessible," says Sasser, a sophomore at the U. of Southern California. "I can do it from my room. If I had to show up at an office from eight to five, I wouldn't make it."

Of course he wouldn't. A man has to get his education.

Tricia Laine, Assistant Editor /
Illustration by Josh Wilkes, Murray State U., Ky.

Bits & Bytes!

Hooking up with professors

Remember when notebooks had wire spirals and snagged your sweaters? Now we know them as the little computers you can take anywhere. And for a pilot group of freshmen this year at Northwest Missouri U., they're constant companions. Professors and students both have the notebooks so they can communicate directly. It's being used for speech, health and wellness, math and English classes in specially designed classrooms. The 95 freshmen paid an extra \$395 to be in the program and were only allowed one elective in a conventional classroom. Northwest hopes to implement complete campuswide notebook use by spring 1998. Now, remember to raise your mouse if you have a question....

Where do we keep the candles?

The first step is to admit you have a problem. U. of Minnesota students realized just how dependent they are on the Internet this summer when a fire destroyed the fiber-optic cable that links the school to the international Internet. Christopher Hyde, a senior, said the shutdown put his life in perspective — "Like when the lights go out and people realize how modern we've become. We still need to write and read and interact one-on-one." Yeah, but you can't download games from a piece of stationery.