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EDITORIAL

Thanks for memories, debts, Jarvis

Two months' worth of rent. One hundred fourteen pitchers of Drop Top at Sakura. Two hundred twenty-eight movie rentals from Blockbuster.

These are just a few of the things the average resident undergraduate, taking 15 credits per term, could pay for with \$682.32, the newest number in the latest of University tuition hikes.

The increase, likely to be approved and take effect this fall, will raise annual tuition and fees to more than \$6,000 a year. Just four short years ago, a student wouldn't pay a cent above \$4,000.

So what happened?

Well, the economy tanked and people lost jobs. Others couldn't find work. Tax money the state expected didn't exist. The budget the state planned to implement was useless. Cuts needed to be made, and higher education became an easy target. With less state funding, schools in Oregon had to make ends meet. Tuition went up.

Around the same time, the incompetent State Board of Higher Education hired its new leader, the soon-to-be-gone Richard Jarvis.

Jarvis, who handed in his resignation a week ago and will be out of his chancellor position June 30, was selected less than two years ago to head the Oregon University System.

The board could have selected Warren H. Fox, who said his main goal was to keep education accessible. Or it could have selected Peter S. Hoff, who said his main goal was to find a balance between the access to and the quality of education.

Instead, the board hired Jarvis, who was chancellor of the nation's only online university system. That system went bankrupt.

Jarvis planned to increase OUS enrollment to 100,000 students by 2010 (Jarvis had been successful in his efforts to increase Nevada's enrollment, where he also served as chancellor).

He also quickly proposed "The Deal," an absolutely absurd plan that asked the state — in the middle of gross financial woes — to foot 50 percent of the costs of higher education.

"It's the game in town right now," Jarvis said in October 2002, somehow managing to keep a straight face. "We're looking for this to be our campaign in the Legislature next spring."

Two weeks later Jarvis, while on campus, defended the plan, saying, "We don't want to pre-judge and imagine that bad things could happen."

In the winter of 2003, voters rejected Measure 28 and tuition went up. Later, the Legislature made cuts to the current biennium's higher-education budget. In the winter of 2004, voters rejected Measure 30, and now tuition is set to go up again.

While Jarvis can't be solely blamed for the increases (the Legislature had a little something to do with the situation), OUS in general should shoulder much of the responsibility. The board hired someone with a suspect history in terms of financial stability at a time when money management was key. Board members resigned late last year (an essential firing by Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski).

Resignation was the only option for Jarvis, who stubbornly stuck to his "innovative" ways and did nothing to address his fiduciary responsibilities.

Here's what Jarvis had to say when he announced in November that his vision, "The Deal," had died: "We're doing the best we can because the state revenue picture kept getting worse. That led to bigger cuts and bigger tuition to fill in those cuts."

Looks like, perhaps, someone should have done a little "pre-judging." Looks like that "game" was a little wack, too.

Well, Mr. Jarvis, we'll be doing without shelter, entertainment and beer thanks to your lack of recognizing the painfully obvious. Please — and we do mean this — don't let the door hit ya where the good Lord split ya.

With new leadership in the State Board of Higher Education and cuts planned at the Chancellor's Office, let's hope we're headed in a new direction. Oregon's next chancellor needs to be proficient in the art of belt-tightening, and he or she needs to understand and be committed to doing what Jarvis did not. He or she needs to listen to what students want more than anything else — affordable education.



Steve Baggs Illustration

a lack of PROOF

I'm surprised and disappointed by how many of my friends sincerely believe that President Bush knew specifically about the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks beforehand and still allowed them to occur. These are smart and usually levelheaded people, and I'm flabbergasted that they give credence to such an outlandish accusation.

The theory that Bush had some nefarious connection to the Sept. 11 plot has gained a surprising amount of traction among liberals. Former Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean even called the foreknowledge theory "interesting."

One would think that if President Bush knew about the attacks ahead of time, he would have gotten his secretary of defense out of the Pentagon before it got hit. He would have squirreled away his family and Cabinet before the arrival of United Airlines Flight 93, which was headed for Washington, D.C. and crashed in rural Pennsylvania.

But it should be noted that the theorists do have some factual support for their arguments. The Bush family has deep interests in Saudi Arabia, home to 15 of the 19 Sept. 11 hijackers, and strong ties to much of the country's elite. And it's an open secret that many of the Bush administration's policies have been handsomely beneficial to President Bush's personal finances as well as those of members of his administration.

There are also many bizarre and unexplainable occurrences surrounding the attacks, such as why the bin Laden family was ushered out of the United States in the immediate aftermath of the attacks without thorough questioning by intelligence professionals. Yet I can't wrap my head around the idea that Bush could be quite so evil as to let 2,800 people die in the most horrific and audacious terrorist attack in world history.

It's true that President Bush has done



Chuck Slothower
Taking issue

nothing to earn our trust. He and members of his administration exaggerated, misrepresented and flat-out lied their way into a war of choice that is turning out just about as well as many liberals thought it would.

Other examples of the administration's selective honesty abound, including cherry-picking science that supports the administration's agenda while ignoring stronger science that contradicts it. It's also despicable that the administration withheld the true cost of its Medicare bill from Congress while Bush's allies on Capitol Hill, according to various media reports, exerted unprecedented pressure to get the bill passed, including holding the usual fifteen-minute roll call open for three hours and allegedly attempting to bribe Rep. Nick Smith, R-Mich., a moderate Republican who voted against the bill, to the tune of \$100,000 (which would be a federal crime and deserves far more attention than it has received).

Of course we all wish Sept. 11 didn't happen. But the attacks were the result not of a mischievous plot by Bush, but of a colossal failure of intelligence coupled with a bureaucracy that moves at the speed of molasses.

The best-known pre-Sept. 11 indication of the impending attacks is the memorandum written by Phoenix FBI agent Kenneth Williams expressing concern about the presence of suspected terrorists at flight schools. The fact that this

memorandum didn't receive close attention at the highest levels of the FBI, nor in Bush's Cabinet, may well be the biggest bureaucratic blunder in American history.

However, it might have to compete with the CIA monitoring a terrorist meeting in Malaysia that two of the Sept. 11 hijackers attended. The CIA failed to put the men, who were already linked to al-Qaida, on a terrorist watch list of people barred from entering the country. The future hijackers entered the United States one week after the meeting. The Toronto Star reported.

Yet you can't blame Bush or his top advisers for the failures of lower-level bureaucracy. Even if they had gotten the Phoenix memorandum, it's a long step from having a notion that something's afoot to knowing that an attack is planned on a specific date with specific targets and specific perpetrators. Likewise, keeping two of the 19 hijackers out of the United States would probably not have prevented the attacks.

Revelations may be forthcoming from National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice's testimony on Thursday or from the final report by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. But barring any new information, I'm inclined to give Bush the benefit of the doubt.

Democrats face an extremely difficult challenge in unseating President Bush this November, and spouting conspiracy theories does not give voters the impression that Democrats are serious about confronting the very real threat of terrorism. If liberals want to have any chance of winning this election, they have to speak in terms to which moderates can relate.

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