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Pell Grant restricted by Bush's new plan

The administration's proposal would change the formula used to calculate student need

BY MORIAH BALINGIT
NEWS REPORTER

The Bush administration is expected to soon revise the eligibility formula that qualifies college students for Pell Grants, possibly rendering 84,000 students ineligible for the grant next year, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education.

The Federal Pell Grant Program is the largest federal aid program for college students and provides need-based grants from \$400-\$4,050 based on a formula that calculates a student's need.

Last year, 4,145 University students received a Pell Grant, and about 700 of those students received the maximum amount, Director of Student Financial Aid Elizabeth Bickford said. The federal Department of Education estimates that about 4.8 million students received a Pell Grant this year.

In the administration's proposed plan, the amount of state and local taxes paid would not play as large a role in the formula used to

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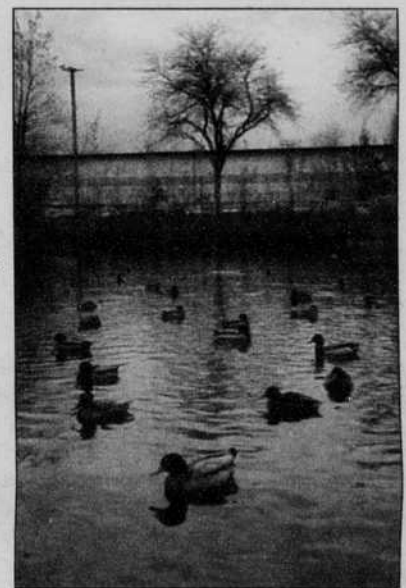
PHOTOS BY LAUREN WIMER

(Left) Freshman Sarah Smith studies for finals at Starbucks on 13th Avenue on Sunday afternoon. Rain and temperatures in the high 40s and low 50s, which are expected through Wednesday, drove students indoors this weekend.

(Above) Campus, seen here from Franklin Blvd., has begun to clear out as many students finish the term and leave for a three-week winter break. Winter term begins Jan. 3.

(Right) Ducks flock to the Eugene Millrace, which, according to www.abouteugene.com, was dug in the channel of an old slough in the mid-1800s when about 500 people lived in Eugene. A flour mill and a wool mill used it for power.

Quiet time



Residential venues may endanger concert-goers

Advocates say informal locales are invaluable, but campus-area basements often get noise complaints and don't meet fire codes

BY KARA HANSEN
NEWS REPORTER

In a city with few all-ages venues, informal settings provide a place for smaller acts to perform and for minors to access the arts. But at least one type of informal venue frequently, if not always, violates safety codes and may put the people who attend in danger.

Advocates of "basement" venues say they fill an important role in Eugene's arts community by providing smaller-scale shows for people of all ages. To keep operating underground, the organizers of these events tend to focus on avoiding attention by insulating rooms and keeping crowds indoors.

They often ignore fire codes.

Stonehenge, a basement venue started this fall that is gaining popularity among University students, is failing to meet fire codes; it does not have proper exits for the number of people attending shows there.

But Stonehenge, at 2841 Central Blvd., isn't the first campus-area venue to encounter problems complying with fire codes. University students establishing basement venues have historically faced difficulties meeting fire standards. Sometimes they get shut down.

It's virtually impossible for a residence to be a proper venue because houses aren't built with the exits needed for large crowds, Deputy Fire Marshal Mark Thompson said.

"It's pretty much completely illegal," Thompson said. "You'd really be inviting a liability

problem to have something like that at a personal residence because if somebody gets hurt, there are going to be lawsuits."

Residential basements rarely meet codes for fire prevention, much less building codes that require sprinkler systems and a minimum number of bathrooms.

"Especially when they're utilizing basements or second-story types of structures where the exiting is going to be limited, and the proper precautions haven't been taken for flame spread through interior decorations, there's always quite a risk for large loss of life," Thompson said. "That's where fire codes are based."

For an occupant load of up to 50 people, the outside needs to be directly accessible from at least a 36-inch-wide door with an approved latching mechanism. For gatherings of more than 50 people, an establishment must provide two marked exits to the outside with doors that swing outward in case of panic.

According to the U.S. Naval Academy Fire Department, fires like the 1942 Coconut Grove nightclub fire that killed nearly 500 people in Boston usually have similar, if not exact, circumstances leading to a massive loss of life.

The similarities between these fires seem to include flammable materials on interior walls; overcrowding; complex building design or flaws; illegal occupancy use; open flame; no suppression system; locked, blocked or unseen exits; or not enough exits, according to the department.

VENUES, page 12A

Employers slow hiring as the holidays draw closer

Net increase in employment is at a five-month low, but shopping season should 'keep the economy chugging'

BY LEIGH STROPE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Employers slowed their hiring as they headed into the holiday shopping season, adding just 112,000 new jobs in November for the weakest gain in five months.

Still, the unemployment rate edged down, raising hopes that workers drawing paychecks will spend, spend, spend the rest of the year.

November's 112,000 net increase in jobs, reported Friday by the Labor Department based on a survey of business payrolls, was the lowest since July. It was about half what economists had forecast, dampened by high oil prices and employers, especially retailers, still trying to do more with fewer workers.

"It's not great job growth, but it's decent," said Joel Naroff, president of Naroff Economic Advisors. "It is decent enough to create income," which should help boost holiday spending and keep the economy chugging.

November's unemployment rate slipped to 5.4 percent, calculated from a separate survey of households. That was down 0.1 percentage point, as more people looking for work found jobs.

The department lowered job growth estimates from the previous two months by about 54,000, tempering October's blockbuster showing of 337,000 to 303,000. Economists said the October job boom appeared artificially high, fueled by hurricane cleanup activity in Florida and the Southeast.

"We wondered how much of the October surge was just a rebound from the hurricanes," said David Wyss, chief

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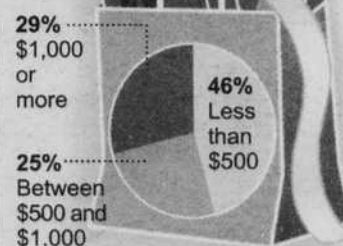
Mall madness

In an uncertain economy, retailers are courting consumers with frivolous gifts and incredible sales. Holiday spending indicators show shoppers plan to spend about the same on gifts this year as they did in 2003.

Christmas spending expectations, average

1999	\$857
2000	\$817
2002	\$690
2003	\$734
2004	\$730

Intend to spend this year



About this poll: Conducted before Thanksgiving except for 2001

SOURCE: Gallup Organization AP