

Presidential candidates leave college issues out of election discussion

Despite many debates, presidential candidates still have not touched on financial issues for college students

Lydia Emily Bashaw
Editor in Chief

With a presidential election less than three weeks away, Americans keep asking the same question to the candidates, "What are you saying?"

Even more notable is the number of college students that are wondering what candidates will do for them. Presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain have both failed in the eyes of college students when it comes to connecting the issues.

"The biggest problem students have right now is that no one is speaking out on our issues," said Ashley Camden, first year student at Clackamas.

"We want someone to talk about college affordability, the future of jobs and what it means to be a youth in America. Unfortunately, the only candidate who has even

mentioned it is Obama, and even then the discussion is lacking," Camden continued.

In the two debates so far between the candidates – the first on Sept. 25 in Oxford, Miss. and the second on Oct. 7 – there was little to no conversation about what each candidate is going to do for students. Nevertheless, though the mainstream discussions have not included student issues, there has been some conversation directed at students.

In a campaign speech on Nov. 7, 2007, Obama claimed that he wanted to make college affordable for everyone.

"That's the best investment we can make in our future," said Obama.

Obama's campaign Web site, at barackobama.com, continued this statement by providing a detailed plan of the changes he would make to help students.

One of these is the American Opportunity Tax Credit, which would give an immediate \$4,000 refund credit to anyone paying tuition. This refund would cover two-thirds of the cost of most public colleges and universities.

Obama's other goals are to simplify the application process for

financial aid, create programs to help younger students prepare for college, expand Pell Grants for low-income families and eliminate expensive bank subsidies.

However, the most applicable piece of Obama's plan is the Community College Partnership Program, which would help to strengthen community colleges through grants, creating new associates programs and rewarding colleges.

McCain's Web site also outlines his plans for what he wants to do for students.

Some of his goals are to prepare colleges and universities for the 21st Century, increase tax benefits for those attending college, simplify the process for financial aid, improve the grant money going to research programs at universities and fix the student lending programs. When McCain's press office was contacted to expand on these ideas, no one was available for comment.

Despite the information available, the economy has taken the forefront. Without detailed discussion about their issues, students are still not convinced.

"It is not that I do not believe that they support college students," said Joshua Ragin, another Clackamas student. "It is the fact that neither candidate has put down a clear cut path of how they are going to help us. We are not middle class Americans; most of us have not even gotten the chance to become part of a class. We are not in the military, so veterans' benefits do not touch most of us. We are just left out. No one is talking about how we are the ones who have to keep this

country running after (the candidates) are dead and gone."

After three debates, Americans are still seeking answers to questions no one cares to follow up on.

Following the two presidential debates, CNN reported online that 55 percent of viewers were still left with unanswered questions. However, on CNN's forum many voters said that it was clear that Obama won the first two debates, but that fact did not clinch their vote.

"I am not 100 percent in either direction," said Kerry Calistero, a registered Republican and Clackamas student. "I think that the last debate will really help me clinch my decision. I am sure there are many other students in the same place as I am."

The current campaign has turned to the economy, the war in Iraq and healthcare. With the largest number of new voters to date, some are wondering when the issues will be directed at them. Yet, most agree that, either way, the best choice is still to vote.

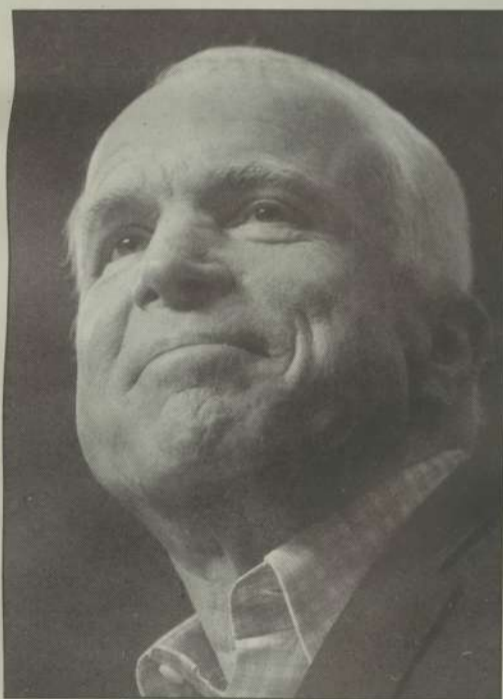
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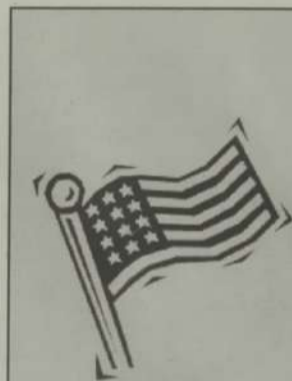
OBAMA

ter, and everyone their ballot turn Henry Truey, a MyDebates.com, interview.

"It doesn't you agree with is getting your and telling people think the best America. People said, 'If you don't can't bitch.' What have said is, 'I vote, you can't whether America ceeds.'"



McCAIN



The next presidential will be held Oct. 15. It will be aired on all broadcast stations.

Ballots must be dropped no later than 8 p.m. on day, Nov. 4. Postmark count.

GREEN: grant fuels sustainable courses and campus change

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"We're always refreshing content, why not do it with something good?" Truesdell said.

Vice President of College

Services Courtney Wilton hopes that the grant money and these courses will help "reach out to the students whether it is in the short term or the long term."

Wilton also hopes that the new sustainable courses will

help attract new students to the school and increase enrollment.

The grant proposal was the brainchild of five dedicated staff members, who Truesdell estimated put in about 60 hours

of work from starting with brainstorming sessions to actually sending in the letter. Mike Mattson, Bill Briare, Theresa Tuffli, Hoyt and Truesdell worked throughout the summer in order to get the grant

finished by its deadline. The grant is actually reoccurring, money must be used by Nov. 30, 2009, the date expires.

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