

The Nexus

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Journalism Education Association/ National Scholastic Press Association

Spring National Convention 2008, Third Place
Fall National Convention 2007, First Place
Spring National Convention 2007, First Place
Spring National Convention 2006, Fourth Place

San Diego County Journalism Education Association

Grand Sweepstakes 2005-2008 First Place
Newspaper Sweepstakes 2006, 2008, First Place

San Diego Union Tribune

Best High School Newspaper 2007, 2008

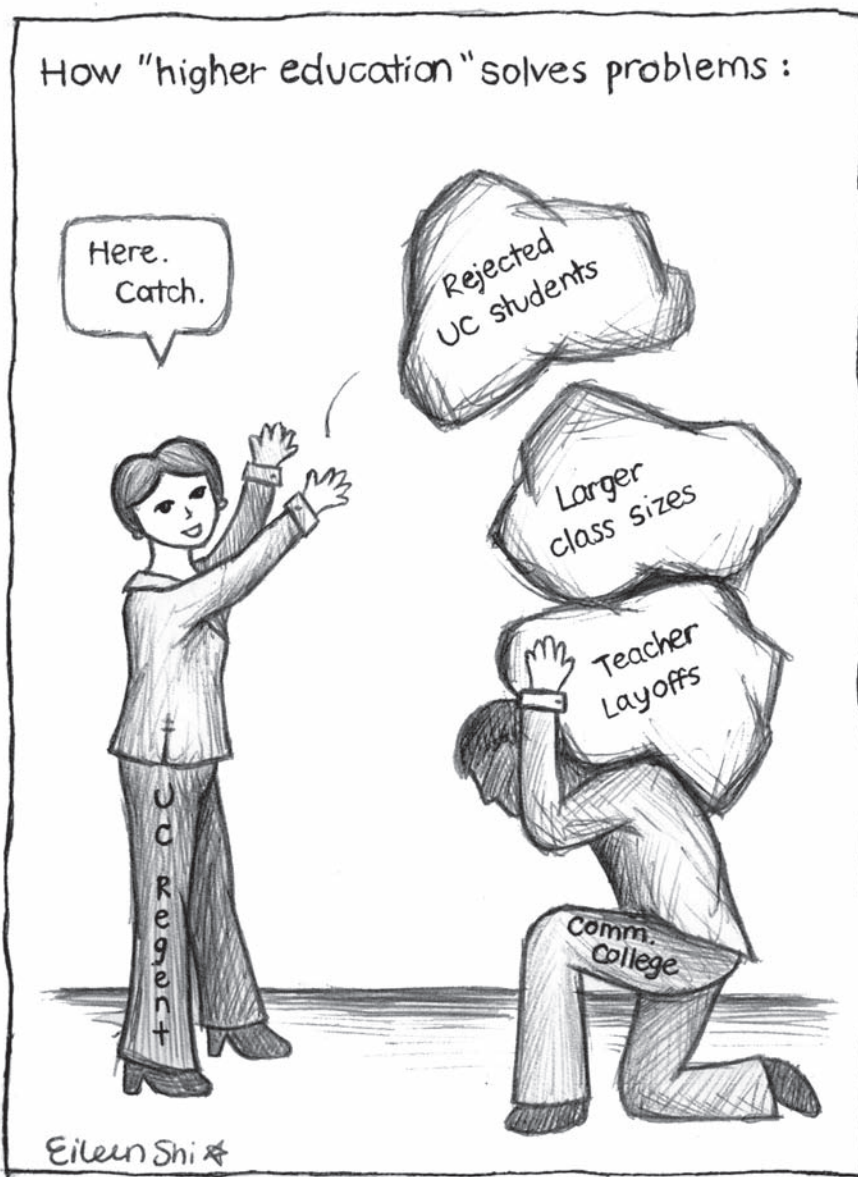
National Scholastic Press Association

Pacemaker Finalist 2003, 2004, 2008
Pacemaker Winner 2003, 2008

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UC overburdens community college



Derek Dyer
STAFF WRITER

Desperate times call for desperate measures. But even desperate measures should make sense.

In an effort to keep budget shortfalls in check, the UC system has planned to cut next year's freshmen admission rate by at least six percent, and possibly more if conditions don't improve.

UC regents defended the plan by suggesting that would-be applicants attend community college as an alternative to a UC school. As a concession, they stated that they would make it easier for cut students to transfer to a UC campus after two years of community college.

Yet while this plan does seem to temporarily free up the hands of the increasingly strained UC system, one staggering problem has been overlooked: What about the community colleges themselves?

California's community college system is even more swamped with students than UC schools are, and it's only getting worse. Budget cuts have affected these schools as well, forcing many community colleges to cut classes, lay off workers and expand class sizes—all of which have made it more difficult for students to get their credits.

According to the Los Angeles Times, enrollment is expected to rise by as much as 10 percent at many community campuses.

And still, UC regents are planning to dump even more students into this system that's already bursting at the seams.

What the people behind this plan

don't realize is that pushing the problem to the side isn't going to solve anything. They're simply relocating the problem; improving it one place while worsening it elsewhere. That's like a kid scooping up the clutter from his floor and shoving it into his closet.

The room will appear spotless when his mom comes in, but we all know what's going to happen when she opens that door.

And then there's the relocated students themselves to consider. UC officials claim that the cut students will later be able to transfer into a UC school after two years of community college. But the more students that are dumped into community colleges, the harder it is for students to get the credits to transfer in the first place.

According to a recent poll by the Public Policy Institute of California, only 25 percent of California's community college students who plan to transfer into a four-year university succeed. And the more crowded community schools get, the stiffer the competition to get into overcrowded classes becomes.

At the end of the day, this decision to cut admissions will ignite more problems than it solves. The plan won't even fix the budget problems; it'll just redistribute them. Tackling issues with the state budget is never easy, but at the very least the solutions should improve the problems. And that means improving them statewide, not just removing the problems from one spot and dumping them somewhere else.

The UC budget problems might appear solved at first, but this decision will only cause more issues later. Because that closet door won't stay closed forever.

Staff Editorial

State budget plans overlook value of quality education

When California was faced with a \$42 billion budget shortfall this year, education was an immediate consideration for billions of dollars in cuts. But as California legislators slash education funding, what they fail to realize is that increasing—not decreasing—funding of K-12 education will actually prevent future fiscal catastrophes like this one.

The importance of accessing a quality education and graduating from high school is something that must be acknowledged and invested in.

Once a high school diploma is obtained, there is an increased likelihood of attaining a college education, which usually leads to higher-paying jobs. When people have jobs that pay well, they gain a greater sense of accomplishment.

With a fulfilled education and the side-benefit of financial stability comes a sense of self-worth and self-confidence. As layoffs occur at income levels, those with college educations possess the resources to bounce back.

A more satisfied populace would create a society based more greatly on "give" than "take." With more money in happier people's pockets, the need for government-subsidized assistance would diminish, while philanthropic giving would take rise. Positivity would also lead to a lower crime rate, as discontent and violence could be lowered, lowering public service costs and corrections programs.

On a state level, where education gets the vast majority of its funding, a higher-skilled workforce would generate larger state revenue than a predominantly blue-collar one. With higher-paying jobs comes purchasing power, which generates spending and cash flow into the local, state and national economies.

By improving citizens' self-worth through education, the prosperity of the society as a whole strengthens.

In California, prison funding has taken priority over education. The state's inmate population is and has been growing for years, which costs taxpayers and drains state funds. But not all states are in the same predicament as California, and by learning from the success of states that value education, California can begin to recover.

The incarceration rate in California is 3,556 inmates per 100,000 people. The cost to take care of these criminals is unacceptably disproportional to per-pupil spending. The annual cost per inmate in California is \$25,053, but California spends only \$7,905 for each student. By contrast, New Jersey has a 10-percent lower crime rate and spends nearly \$4,000 more per student, a clear indicator of the positive effect education has on individuals and their communities. The more people who receive a well-funded education, the fewer criminals there will be to overcrowd our prisons and exhaust California's monetary resources.

According to the Criminal Justice Statistic Center, if California increased its current graduation rate of 70.1 percent (compared to New Jersey's 88.3 percent) by 10 percent, it would equate to 500 fewer murders and 20,000 fewer aggravated assaults per year. By investing more heavily in education, we can reduce our prison population and in the long run save the state billions.

Yes, given the huge chunk of the funding pie that already goes to education, it is an easy target for cuts. Even so, saving a few dollars today while risking the long-term peril of citizens throughout the state is not a good enough excuse to give it such low priority.

The Nexus Mission Statement

The Nexus is an open forum for Westview students that aims to provide the public with information that follows standards of accuracy, ethics and professionalism. As a source of news, opinions and entertainment for its readers, The Nexus commits itself to impartiality and depth of coverage.

The Nexus is published by Journalism 2 students. All editorial decisions are made by the students with the guidance of adviser Jeff Wenger. The editorial board comprises the editors, who write and select the staff editorial.

The opinions published in The Nexus do not necessarily represent those of the Westview administration or PUSD school board. When opinions of an individual are expressed, they are labeled as such. Letters to the editor must be signed as the opinion of the individual. The editors select submissions for print based on relevancy to readers, and they may be edited for space or content reasons.

PUSD lacking essential language classes

Will Ellis
STAFF WRITER

PUSD has deemed that Spanish, French, and Filipino are the language classes that students need the most, classes that boast depth and varying levels of difficulty. But while the district offers a wide range of language, it is doubtful these languages are truly the ones necessary for students to succeed after high school.

Unfortunately, a majority of these courses may greatly help students to secure jobs.

Instead, Westview should consider teaching its students Arabic and Mandarin Chinese.

For some time, the U.S. government has been scrambling for Arabic translators. We are currently fighting a war in the Middle East, an effort that will likely be going on for a very long time. Even after the war ends, the United States will most likely retain troops in the area, and a great number of diplomatic dealings will have to be dealt with in the area.

Currently, there is a massive shortage of Arabic Translators even as the government is hiring non-fluent Arabic speakers.

If offered in PUSD, Arabic would entice students to continue the course in college and aid students in obtaining a stable job.

Similarly, Mandarin Chinese offers an alternative job path.

As hard economic times hit our country once again, students who took Mandarin and are proficient in the language will be more likely to retain their jobs in the business sector than a proficient student of almost any other language class at Westview.

The United States is increasingly ingrained in the global market. And China is the current rising global power, the power that the United States needs to be working more with than ever.

The Chinese realized that it would be beneficial to know the language of the world's other major economic super power. More than half of Chinese students are learning English.

If a business sees a prospective employee fluent in a globally in demand language, it will have more reason to hold on to him or her than the next applicant who knows only English and some French.

Not only will it allow one to retain one's job, but more than likely it will also help make the climb up the corporate ladder one of greater speed and more ease.

With so little in our country being able to speak Mandarin, the company will want to hold on to you, to give you more incentive to stay with them rather than take a job at another business.

Is the U.S. ready to deal with growing trade with China?

409,246,900,000- U.S. dollars in trade with China in 2008

301- The percentage U.S. trade with China has increased since 2000, larger than any other U.S. trading source

.001- The percentage of students being taught Mandarin Chinese in public schools

Sidebar by Will Ellis
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Despite the possible economic strain on school budgets, these classes can help to create secure futures for students.

Offering Arabic and Mandarin classes would offer more jobs and greater job security to students, thus making these classes seem not only advisable, but indeed could be essential for the future success of our students.

Income tax hikes obstruct economic growth

Daniel Edwards
OPINIONS EDITOR

Since its inception, the question of raising taxes is debated frequently, along with its effect on economic growth and government income.

But even in today's tough economic climate, as the government plunges further into debt, it is evident that raising taxes can have a detrimental effect on citizens.

The biggest and most identifiable tax is the income tax, through which the government takes a certain percent of one's annual salary.

Since this is one of the government's primary revenue sources, there have always been proposals to raise taxes, especially on the rich.

The Bush tax cuts that were implemented during his first term lowered the tax rate for many families, particularly the rich.

But as government funds shrink, many politicians want to change that.

However, those who favor income tax increases are generally short-sighted in their approach.

Data consistently reveals that as the tax rate increases for the rich or poor, the amount of government profits changes little, if at all.

This inverse relationship can be demonstrated by what is known as the Laffer curve.

The theory behind this is that when people have to pay more taxes, taxpayers tend to default because they cannot afford to pay them.

Or, people decide to pay only a partial amount or hope that the government doesn't catch them, the former an action of the poor, the latter of the rich.

Simply put, regardless of how much money a person makes in a year, there is a psychological evasion to paying taxes. As they climb higher, so does the anxiety of paying them.

For this stigma to be diminished, the people paying taxes must believe in paying

them and seeing the rate of their taxation as reasonable.

The real trouble is how this relates to economic growth. When people realize that they will be taxed more in the end regardless of economic status, consumers tend to spend less.

This is exactly why income taxes for any tax bracket should not be increased. If anything, they should be reduced by different percentages based on yearly income.

This way, the government leaves more money for consumers to spend, stimulating business which leads to more hiring, increasing the job markets. This puts money in consumer's pockets and helps the economy expand. In doing so, the government can make more money because more people are willing and can afford to pay taxes.

Keeping their jobs and most of their incomes give people more incentive not to hide their earnings from the IRS and simultaneously spend more money to stimulate the economy.

During the 1980s, President Reagan's economic adviser, Art Laffer, devised the aforementioned curve.

Preceding Reagan, economic growth was stunted by an absurd tax rate. Once this relationship was discovered, taxes were lowered and the economy expanded over time.

The most used counterpoint to lowering tax rates is by looking at the effects of the Bush tax cuts of 2001 and 2003.

Some economists and politicians argue that those tax cuts are partially why we are currently in an economic tailspin.

By giving more money to the rich, the wealthy exploited the poor and in turn, Wall Street. But the flaw of the tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 wasn't the ideal of tax cuts themselves.

Regardless of the type of economic climate our nation is in, the issue of raising taxes should be reconsidered.

The only way to quench the government's thirst for cash is if the nation footing the bill believes it reasonable.

Obama's signature finally ushers in equal pay

Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act Timeline

1998- Ledbetter filed a complaint alleging that men doing similar work were being paid 15 to 40 percent more.

The federal appeals court threw out her claim since she did not file within the 180-day window.

2008- The case was a point of contention between Sen. Obama and Sen. McCain in the Presidential Election.

2009- The Ledbetter Act was the first bill signed into law by the Obama Administration.

Sidebar by Anna Mills
Source: CNN.com

Halie Albertson
STAFF WRITER

Twenty-two cents. Not enough to buy a bag of chips at the nearest grocery store, but enough to warrant a new legislation. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women who worked full-time in 2007 made 78 cents for every one dollar earned by a man, a 22-cent difference that translated to an average of \$152 less per week.

In 1998, Lilly Ledbetter, a female supervisor in Alabama, discovered that she was being paid less than her male colleagues who had the same amount or even less experience than she did.

When she filed a lawsuit, Ledbetter was granted back pay, which was granted to her under the Equal Pay Act of 1963. Her case was appealed before the Supreme Court, where it was decided the plaintiff must file his or her case within 180 days of the original discriminatory action.

Democrats introduced Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in April 2008 to restore the law to what it originally stated: that the filing period for unequal pay charges is 180 days from the plaintiff's last discriminatory paycheck as opposed to date the employer

started unfairly paying him or her. This is crucial, because the discrimination could go unnoticed for years.

The 2008 bill was defeated in the senate, although it was supported by the house majority Democrats, including the then-Senator Barack Obama, who made it known that he supported Ledbetter.

So, when he took office in January 2009, President Obama's first act was to renew the bill and sign it into a law.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act is both a necessary and enormously important step towards complete gender equality. However, despite these facts, opponents to the law remain.

Although the act succeeded in the senate in January 2009, it won by a margin of only 25 votes, 61-36. And although every female Republican voted in its favor, every male Republican except for one voted against it.

This worries equal-rights crusaders. If the issue is a political one, rather than a moral one, then why did Republicans' female counterparts supported the bill while male senators did not?

Republicans, who are seen as "pro-business," generally claim to disapprove

of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act because they believe that it will cause unnecessary strain on large corporations that are sentenced to pay reparations.

Former President George W. Bush said the law would "impose a tremendous burden on employers," which is why he did not support it originally in April 2008.

However, if corporations had fairly paid their workers in the first place, they would not currently face paying their employees what they are owed.

With the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, women, minorities and other discriminated persons once again hold the power to bring their cases to court whether or not they knew that they were being paid unfairly.

And although Ledbetter will never see a dime of what she would have been due, the reversal of her Supreme Court case will mean that people, no matter gender, race or religion, will have an easier time earning justice and the fair wage owed.

Hopefully, with the passage of this necessary act, society as a whole will be made more aware of discriminatory pay discrepancies, and will slowly be able to move forward towards greater equality.