

U. of I. clips the wings of aviation program

BY TARA MALONE
Tribune reporter

University of Illinois trustees agreed Thursday to shutter a decades-old aviation program in what one official cautioned could be the first of many cost-cutting moves at the state's flagship campus.

The Institute of Aviation, based at the Urbana-Champaign campus, will close its doors at the end of the 2013-14 school year, according to the board's 6-2 vote.

"I don't like it either, but I see it as one step in many we will have to take," trustee Karen Hasara said.

The decision came despite a 57-54 vote by the faculty senate against cutting the institute and the efforts of aviation advocates and alumni to preserve the program in the face of what they describe as an anticipated boom in the demand

for commercial pilots. Students, graduates and their instructors picketed outside the University of Illinois at Chicago building where the trustees met Thursday.

Come Monday, graduate Kristina Bouzios, 24, starts her job as a pilot for SkyWest Airlines. The LaGrange resident said she could not have gotten the job without her U. of I. aviation degree.

"The U. of I. is a big name. People recognize it. People respect it. It's a big deal."

Bouzios said.

The Institute of Aviation, which opened in 1945, provides pilot certification as well as courses designed to improve the safety of airplanes and pilots.

But the program served fewer than 160 students last year, less than any other program on campus. Only 34 freshmen entered the program last fall and no aviation students were accepted for the coming semester, top officials said.

Aviation becomes the first program eliminated under a university process intended to identify ways to reduce costs and generate more revenue. The U. of I. and other public universities have struggled with delayed state payments that have triggered pay freezes, furloughs and other cost-cutting efforts.

In his report to the board, interim Chancellor Robert Easter described the aviation program as "the small-

est degree-granting unit" and one with some of the highest costs on the Urbana-Champaign campus. He estimated that closing the program could save at least \$500,000 annually.

"Given the financial condition we find the university in ... we are forced to make difficult decisions going forward," said trustee Pamela Strobel.

The bachelor's program will be eliminated, but university officials said they

plan to pursue ways to make flight training available, possibly through a community college.

Tom Emanuel, interim director of the aviation institute, urged the trustees to preserve the program by merging it with another college on the Urbana-Champaign campus. Closing the program entirely could leave about 70 people without jobs, he said.

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Trustees vote to cancel flight program

Current students
will be given time
to finish studies

By PAUL WOOD

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CHICAGO — The University of Illinois Board of Trustees voted 6-2 Thursday to shut down the UI's Institute of Aviation, after Chancellor Robert Easter declared that the move could save the Urbana campus as much as \$750,000 a year.

According to the board's agenda, the actual closure of the institute "will be delayed until current students have had adequate time to complete their studies, which the campus anticipates will be at the end of Academic Year 2013-2014."

A crowd of about 50 protesters, some in aviation uniforms, had turned up at 7 a.m. to speak against the proposed closure. They left quietly after the board made its decision.

Before the vote was taken, interim Aviation Director Tom Emanuel pleaded for the institute, as did the other two public speakers at the meeting.

Dana Dann-Messier, who heads the aviation alumni group, said the institute fits the core mission of the UI, especially with the many experiments performed there.

Allan Englehardt, a veteran pilot in the Chicago area, said pilot hiring is cyclical, and that

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AVIATION

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the state needs college-educated people to run the industry, which he said is the second-largest in Illinois.

Easter told the trustees he was proud of the institute, which had its beginnings shortly after World War II. But he said demand was decreasing for the aviation programs, meaning the institute was consistently having to take students whose GPAs and ACT scores were the lowest on the Urbana campus.

He said Stewarding Excellence teams he created with interim Provost Richard Wheeler concluded that demand for pilots was decreasing.

But Emanuel, the interim director, disputed that, saying FAA rules that force pilots to retire will result in a shortage.

"The institute has had a downward trend in the number of

applicants the last decade," Easter said. "In 2002, the institute had 176 applicants. By 2009, the institute enrolled 30 students and had five tenure-track faculty members. In response to the declining applicant numbers, the institute increasingly advocated that the campus admit students with lower academic qualifications."

He said the UI considered closing the Institute of Aviation several times in its history, as early as 1974.

"In 1992, an aviation task force again reviewed the institute," Easter said. "And in 2007, then-Provost Linda Katehi formed yet another review committee. The 2007 review committee recommended that the campus create a new College of Technology and Society, within which the institute could be housed."

But he said the fiscal downturn precluded that.

The campus also investigated moving the programs into

the College of Engineering or another campus college, Easter said.

In public comments, Dann-Messier argued that the institute was not allowed to succeed when its programs were cut.

Easter said outside the meeting that he was intrigued by the idea of Parkland College in Champaign taking over some pilot training, even if there were no degree program attached. He cited the Pathways program as a successful effort to integrate Parkland students into future life at the UI, including advisers and even residence halls.

The institute's graduate programs could find at least a temporary home in the Graduate College. Easter said there were only a half dozen graduate students.

Chris Kennedy, chairman of the board, left before the vote was taken. The three student trustees voted to keep the institute open, but their votes did not count toward the official tally.



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Article updated: 7/21/2011 11:51 PM

U of Illinois votes to end aviation program

By

Trustees at the University of Illinois voted Thursday to end the school's aviation program, citing cost savings and dwindling enrollment.

The move closes the program and degrees it offers at the university's flagship campus, despite outcry from students and faculty who claim the university targeted the program years ago by not filling positions and that the demand for pilots is rising.

Interim Chancellor Robert Easter, who oversees the Urbana-Champaign campus, praised the program's "long and prestigious history as a leader in aviation education" but said ending it will save up to \$750,000 a year. He said enrollment has dropped more than 50 percent from 2002 to 2010.

"We have concluded that it is in the best interests of the campus to discontinue the degree programs and to close the Institute," Easter told the board, which met in Chicago.

The board voted 6-2 in favor of closing, according to university spokesman Tom Hardy. University officials said the program officially ends in 2014 giving current students a change to finish their degrees.

The campus has provided some form of flight training since the mid-1940s and operates Willard Airport in central Illinois. The university's Institute of Aviation began its bachelor of science in 1999 and a masters' degree was added in 2003.

But university officials had considered closing the program for years, even as early as the 1970s. University officials said the institute had 176 applicants in 2002, but only 30 were enrolled by 2009. In the following year, 34 freshmen enrolled in the program.

Dozens of opponents to the proposal picketed the trustees' meeting Thursday morning. They had started a website, www.savetheinstituteofaviation.com, which said closure rumors have hurt the institute's recruitment efforts and the program was denied transfer students. They said closure of the program will leave a big gap in aviation education.

"It definitely is a blow," said Laura Gerhold, the academic adviser at the institute. "The industry is forecasting a huge demand for pilots. We're no longer going to be producing pilots for that pilot pool."

The university has said it is talking to other schools to look for a way to keep parts of the program alive in some form.

"The campus is engaged in ongoing conversations with other institutions of higher education regarding how to support their possible interest in creating local flight training programs," Easter said.

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University of Illinois votes to end aviation program

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Posted Jul 21, 2011 @ 04:15 PM

CHICAGO — The University of Illinois will end its **aviation program**.

University trustees approved a resolution today to close the program based at its Urbana-Champaign campus and do away with the bachelor's degree it offers.

Interim Chancellor Robert Easter oversees the campus. He says closing the program will save \$750,000 a year and the program's enrollment has dropped more than 50 percent since 2002.

But graduates of the Institute of Aviation and other opponents of the proposal said the university started targeting the program years ago by leaving faculty positions open and in other moves. They say the demand for pilots will only increase and the end of the institute leaves a gap.

University officials say they're talking to other schools to keep parts of the program alive in some form.

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Updated: 6:15 PM Jul 21, 2011

U of I Aviation may Impact ER Decision

A vote today by the University of Illinois Trustees could have a positive impact on Rockford's chances of landing an Embry-Riddle campus.

Posted: 5:53 PM Jul 21, 2011



ROCKFORD (WIFR) -- A vote today by the University of Illinois Trustees could have a positive impact on Rockford's chances of landing an Embry-Riddle campus.

The U of I trustees approved a resolution to close that school's aviation program.

Interim Chancellor Robert Easter had recommended ending the program, which will save the University about 750-thousand dollars a year.

Many believe after today's vote, Rockford would be able to recruit an ever larger pool of Midwestern students if Embry-Riddle picks the Forest City over Houston for the location of its third campus.

Find this article at:

http://www.wifr.com/news/headlines/U_of_I_Aviation_125983289.html

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

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SIU head's kin chooses different university

By JODI S. COHEN
Tribune reporter

The granddaughter of Southern Illinois University's president has decided to enroll at a different university this fall following her decision to turn down a full-ride academic scholarship to SIU.

Maddie Poshard, 18, had been one of 24 students selected to receive the Carbondale campus Presidential/Chancellor Scholarship, a taxpayer-funded free ride for four years, worth about \$80,000.

After a Tribune story revealed several weeks ago that she was a scholarship recipient, she decided to turn it down.

She said Thursday that she has decided to instead attend Xavier University in Cincinnati, which offered her a scholarship.

SIU President Glenn Poshard had said he would help pay for her college education at SIU when she announced she was turning down the scholarship.

"Like every 18-year-old, I'm looking forward to starting my education and career free from the public spotlight. I also do not wish to bring any further unwanted attention to SIUC or my family. It is important to me that my accomplishments are earned and seen as my own," Maddie Poshard said.

A pre-med student, Poshard said, "it is hard to argue with the success of Xavier pre-med students when it comes to getting into medical school, as their acceptance is nearly double the national average."

Maddie Poshard had told the Tribune that she was excited to be a third-generation Saluki and never considered not applying for the scholarship. "I grew up following Saluki basketball games, and received some maroon gear every Christmas. ... SIU has been part of my life for a long time, and it just feels like it's where I belong," she wrote to the newspaper last month.

SIU spokesman Dave Gross said the president understands his granddaughter's decision.

"He wants what is best for Maddie. He was looking forward to her attending the university, and the university was very important to her," Gross said. "But the fact is that the perception that surrounded the scholarship issue completely dwarfed the reality that Maddie had earned the award on her own. That was a glimpse into what life at the university might have been for Maddie."

Maddie Poshard was by all accounts a top high school student with a history of exemplary leadership, and university officials said all the rules were followed in awarding her the scholarship.

Still, some questioned whether the appearance of impropriety was a problem and whether President Poshard would have been wiser to ask her not to apply.

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For today's debt-averse U.S. college students, 'loan' is a 4-letter word

Yet high cost forces more to borrow

BY LISA LAMBERT
Reuters

WASHINGTON — When Emi Young decided to attend Pomona College in California a few years ago, she broke with a tradition that has become as closely associated with college as fraternity parties and cramming for final exams.

Young did not take out a dime of student loans.

She preferred Pomona to other schools because it does not include loans in the financial aid packages offered to students, relying on grants and employment.

"I don't necessarily want to feel completely tied down in what I do with my education because of the debt I come out with," said the politics and philosophy major, who starts her third year this fall and has her sights set on law school.

Like many young people across the country, Young is nervous about starting her career while in debt.

For many who came of age during the financial crisis, blindly borrowing for an education makes little sense, especially when they wonder if they'll find work quickly after graduation.

But, experts said, the economic factors that made them debt-averse may make them debt-dependent.

"It's kind of like this dichotomy: There's this anecdotal evidence ... that students and families are averse to taking out debt," said Justin Draeger, CEO of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. But, "We are seeing more students having to borrow."

States, faced with declining revenues, have slashed higher-education funding, causing tuition to balloon at public universities. Many also have cut the grants they offer to help offset education expenses.

The federal Pell Grant program also has been cut.

Then there is the jobs picture. Students may not be able to find jobs to help pay for school, and parents who are laid off may not be

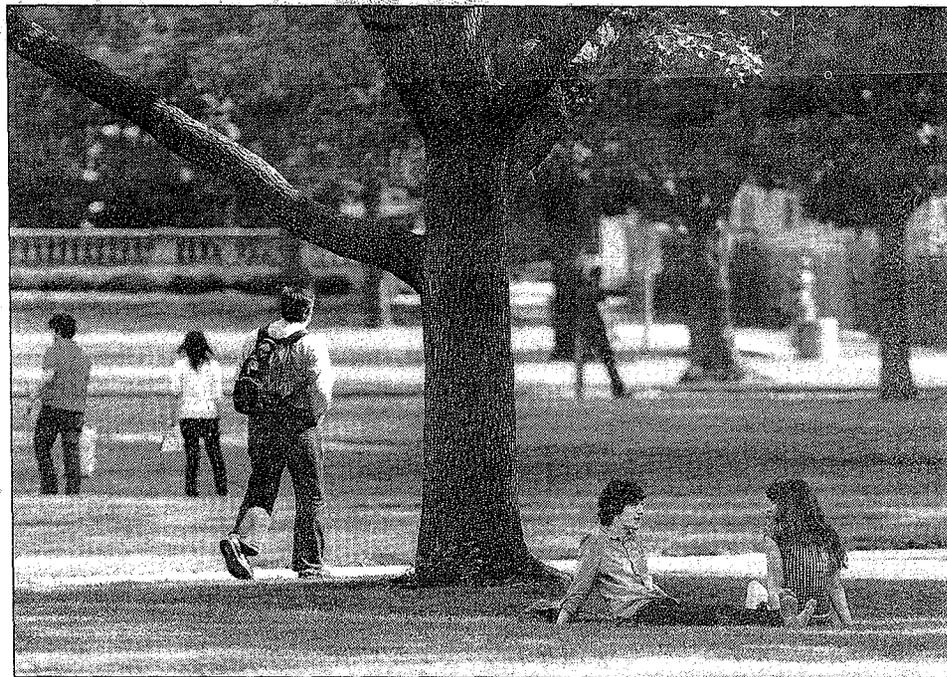
able to help foot the bill. And as more long-term unemployed people return to school, they create competition for lecture hall seats and financial aid.

The stock market, meanwhile, hit savings hard.

"I wasn't necessarily looking at the financial crisis and saying, 'I'm trying to learn the lessons of these people,'" Young said. "I do know that when I was first applying and in the first year of college, with all of the financial crisis going on, the savings we'd put away — the investments — dropped to half their value. If I was able to wait, the values of those accounts would go up again."

As a result, many students turn to federal loans. In the 2009-10 school year, 35 percent of all undergraduate students took out a federal Stafford student loan, compared with 23 percent 10 years before, Draeger said. Students also sometimes use private loans.

Paying for college usually has involved many parties, he said, including universi-



DAVID PIERINI/TRIBUNE PHOTO

A recent survey showed that a fourth of students who'd planned to go to a private school switched to a public one, such as the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, above.

ties pitching in.

"We're seeing this gradual shift in the burden for paying for college to individual students and families, and the way that students do this is through loans," he said. "One of the things that may have come out of this recession and jobless recovery is price sensitivity. ... On top of that, they're looking for how much bang they're going to get for their buck."

When the United States was in the throes of the recession, the College Board, which administers

the SAT, conducted studies on how to make college more affordable.

Anne Sturtevant, the board's director of enrollment services and access initiatives, said students wanted to make federal loans more available but questioned high borrowing.

The average borrower in the 2009-10 school year took out \$8,008 in federal loans, an 11.7 percent increase from the 2006-07 school year, before the bursting of the housing bubble and the financial crisis, College Board data show.

"I'm getting an increasing number of calls," said Mark Kantrowitz, who, as publisher of the financial aid and university assistance sites fastweb.com and finaid.org, encounters many families with college-age students. "Parents are losing their jobs."

In a recent survey, he found 24 percent of students who had planned to go to private schools switched to public ones, which tend to be less expensive. But even at public universities, he added, they face money stresses.

EDUCATION

Several states plan to defy 'No Child' act

Current federal requirements are too unrealistic, officials complain

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — At least three states are vowing to ignore the latest requirements under the No Child Left Behind law in an act of defiance against the federal government that demonstrates their growing frustration over an education program they say sets unrealistic benchmarks for schools.

The law sets a goal of having 100 percent of students proficient in math and reading by 2014, but states were allowed to establish how much schools must improve each year. Many states saved the biggest leaps for the final years, anticipating the law would be changed.

But it hasn't, and states like Idaho, Montana and South Dakota are fed up. They are preparing to reject the latest requirements for determining school progress under the 9-year-old law — even if the move toward noncompliance may put them at risk of losing some federal funding.

Idaho will no longer raise the benchmarks that public schools have to meet under No Child Left Behind, nor will it punish the schools that do not meet these higher testing goals, said Tom Luna, the state's superintendent of public schools.

The federal requirements are unrealistic for schools to meet while they wait for the government to enact new education standards, he said.

"We've waited as long as we can," Luna said.

Montana and South Dakota are also rejecting the latest No Child Left Behind targets, while Kentucky is seeking a waiver that would allow the state to use a different method to measure whether students are making adequate progress under the program.

And more states could follow in seeking relief from the federal requirements.

Federal officials recently warned Montana to get in line with the No Child Left Behind requirements by Aug. 15 or the federal government could withhold funds under an education program. The state receives more than \$44 million in federal funding for that program, though it is unclear just how much of that money is at risk.

In Idaho, that program is worth more than \$54 million, and in South Dakota, about \$43.7 million.

As high-profile cheating investigations in Georgia, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C., call attention to state-wide standardized testing, experts say many districts are feeling pressured to meet the standards to avoid penalties under the law.

The No Child Left Behind law was passed in 2001 and signed by then-President George W. Bush.

It has been widely panned by critics who say it brands schools as failures even as they make progress, discourages high academic standards and encourages educators to teach to the test as opposed to providing practical classroom learning to students.

There's bipartisan support for an overhaul, but Republicans and Democrats have different ideas about what sort of reforms should go into the law and how long writing a new bill should take.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan has urged the U.S. House to finish before the next school year starts this fall, but the Republican chairman of the House education committee has said his panel plans to work through the fall.

Montana Schools Superintendent Denise Juneau said the state decided to freeze the federal requirements so schools will not be inaccurately labeled as failing — and suffer the scorn that comes along with the classification.

"Everyone knows it's broken. And the biggest broken piece of No Child Left Behind are these arbitrary bars," Juneau said.

"It's one thing we could do to assist schools and not getting labeled as failing or be denigrated in the press when they are absolutely doing a better" job.

Schools are required to meet 41 benchmarks for student achievement under the law and a school's annual yearly progress is calculated based on test participation, academic achievement, graduation rates and other statistics.

But every few years, the percentage of students who must pass state tests increases.

Of the 821 public school schools in Montana, 255 are not making adequate yearly progress under the current benchmarks. If the state makes the next jump under No Child Left Behind, a whopping 383 schools — nearly half — wouldn't be up to snuff under the federal law.

Juneau said she is optimistic her state will reach a compromise with the federal government on conforming to the law while also helping schools.

In Florida, where just 10 percent of all elementary, middle and high schools met adequate yearly progress goals under No Child Left Behind law in 2011, Interim Education Commissioner John L. Winn said he couldn't say whether his state might seek a reprieve.

Winn is going to let the new education commissioner, who starts in August, decide what action to take, he said.

"He's got to live with that decision," Winn said. "I think I'm going to defer it to him."

Duncan is frustrated with what he has called a "slow motion train wreck" for U.S. schools, warning that many could be labeled as failing under the law if it isn't reformed.

His solution? Grant waivers to the law in exchange for states embracing the department's ideas on education reform.

Those reforms would be similar to those encouraged in the \$4 billion Race to the Top grant competition, which include performance pay for teachers and growth in charter schools, Duncan has said.

But that plan sparked questions from the chairman of the House education committee, Rep. John Kline, R-Minn., who wrote Duncan in late June and asked the secretary to explain how the department has the authority to grant waivers "in exchange for reforms not authorized by Congress."

In his response earlier this month, Duncan said he had the legal authority to grant waivers to the statutory requirements of the law if that's best for students.

At the same time, many states are looking to create new accountability systems that can replace the rules of No Child Left Behind.

Last month, the Council of Chief State School Officers announced 41 states would work together to implement improved systems to hold schools accountable.

"There is a great dissatisfaction with current accountability system that exist in the U.S.," said Gene Wilhoit, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based council.

"It's not a matter of relief from accountability. It's redesigning it so we have a much more positive environment."