

UI will maintain forthright approach

The University of Illinois sincerely regrets the inaccuracy of previously released data about the College of Law Class of 2014 and the confusion and concern that this matter has caused.

But, unlike the characterization in The News-Gazette's September 18 editorial, our quick and forthright response to this incident represents a culture of openness and transparency that is here to stay.

The UI takes very seriously every plausible concern we receive. As soon as we determined the credibility of this report to the University Ethics Office, the UI acted swiftly. We removed the data in question from our website and materials, launched an investigation with support from independent auditors and outside legal counsel, and self-reported the incident to both internal and external stakeholders, including students and faculty, the American Bar Association, the news media and others.

The UI has undertaken a rigorous and comprehensive inquiry so we can fully understand what happened and how it happened, and we can take steps to ensure any inaccuracies will not be repeated. We are moving quickly but deliberately, as the integrity of all data released by the UI is our top priority.

As we have said from the start, once the investigation is complete, we will share our findings, and we will take appropriate corrective action. The direction for this approach comes from the highest levels of the university; we have openly shared what we know, even as we work toward prompt investigation and thorough resolution.

All of us at the UI are disappointed that there are errors and confusion. However, it is no reflection on the quality of our College of Law and the remarkably competent and successful students who make up the Class of 2014 and graduate from our program.

TOM HARDY
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TRIBUNE WATCHDOG UPDATE

Survey: 1 in 4 admissions officers feel pressured

BY JODI S. COHEN
Tribune reporter

About a quarter of college and university admissions officers experience pressure from senior-level administrators, trustees and donors to admit some applicants, according to a first-of-its-kind survey of admissions leaders.

The national survey, from the online publication Inside Higher Ed, found that among all four-year colleges, 27.8 percent of admissions officials said they received pressure from senior administrators, and 23.6 percent experienced pressure from trustees and donors. A greater share of private university officials said they were subject to pressure compared with their public university counterparts.

The survey did not address the question of how the employees respond to the pressure.

"You don't want (administrators, trustees and donors) lobbying on behalf of individual candidates. That is a recipe for unfairness, inappropriate decisions," said Scott Jaschik, an editor of Inside Higher Ed.

The results about admissions pressure are part of a larger survey that addressed a variety of admissions issues, including recruiting strategies and whether some groups of

students such as athletes are admitted with lower academic standards. The online questionnaire was sent to about 2,000 public and private nonprofit colleges and universities in August, and 462 officials responded.

The survey found institutions are focusing more on recruiting "full-pay" students who don't need financial aid, and sometimes

are admitted with lower grades and test scores than other applicants. It also found admissions officers are looking to recruit more out-of-state students.

The publication's editors decided to ask whether admissions officers felt pressure to admit certain applicants after a 2009 Tribune investigation revealed that the **University of Illinois** had a secret

admissions system that allowed the politically powerful to influence decisions.

The university kept lists of undergraduate and Law School applicants sponsored by trustees, legislators and high-ranking administrators, and then bypassed the normal admissions process to admit some of them with subpar credentials. About 160 to 180 undergraduate applicants

were included on the lists each year until the process was eliminated following the Tribune reports.

U. of I. now keeps a publicly accessible log of all incidents in which outside parties attempt to insert themselves into the admissions process.

Jaschik said that while a minority of admissions officers surveyed reported feeling pressure, it is still a

troubling statistic.

"This shows that it is happening and, once you have it happen, there is a danger of what you had at the University of Illinois, where people can give in to the pressure," he said. "People would say that in a well-run institution, that pressure would not happen."

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CAMPUS CHARITABLE FUND DRIVE

Campaign's goal (again): \$1.4 million

Despite falling short last year, organizers upbeat

By JULIE WURTH

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URBANA — Fresh off faculty pay raises, and with no furloughs in sight, the state's largest employee charity drive has again set a \$1.4 million goal after falling short in tough times last year.

The eight-week Campus Charitable Fund Drive at the **University of Illinois** Urbana campus kicked off Monday and runs through Nov. 11.

The advisory board decided to keep the goal the same as in 2010, when the drive fell about 5 percent short with \$1.33 million in donations.

"We were very close, in a difficult year," said board chairman Nick Glumac, professor of mechanical science and engineering.

An early retirement incentive reduced the pool of donors last year, and mandatory furlough days prompted some employees not to give, including some upset by university policies, Glumac said.

"The university doesn't make anything off this collection," Glumac said. "If you don't give to the charitable drive, it's not like the university's hurting. The charities are hurting."

Other employees increased their pledges, recognizing the growing need in the community during a struggling economy, he said.

"In difficult times, the burden falls disproportionately on the needy," Glumac said.

The financial picture is slightly better on campus this year, mostly because the university planned for even deeper state funding cuts and thus had money for modest raises, the first in several years.

Still, the outlook for the wider community and the state

Beneficiaries of last year's drive

Charities funded by the Campus Charitable Fund Drive last year, and the amounts they received:

American Cancer Society: \$78,680
America's Charities: \$61,866
Black United Fund of Illinois: \$14,503
Community Health Charities: \$66,952
Community Shares of Illinois: \$95,112
Earth Share of Illinois: \$68,041
Global Impact: \$88,743
Independent Charities of America: \$82,647
Special Olympics: \$17,142
United Negro College Fund: \$19,610
United Way of Champaign County: \$737,772
TOTAL: \$1,331,068

Source: Campus Charitable Fund Drive

is "as bad or worse than last year," Glumac said. "We felt it would be reasonable to ask to stay with the goal. Hopefully, we can meet it and exceed it this year."

Official state and local poverty statistics are expected Thursday from the census, but a report last week showed 14.1 percent of state residents living below the poverty line in 2010 — the most since 1992.

Champaign County's poverty rate is higher, about 21 percent, according to 2009 census data. A study last spring also showed 15.8 percent of East Central Illinois residents were "food insecure," unable to get enough food on a regular basis.

The Urbana campus drive brings in more than all other employee campaigns combined, Glumac said.

UI DRIVE

Continued from B-1

The State and University Employees Combined Appeal, which includes all public universities and state agencies, raised \$2.6 million last year, including the UI's \$1.33 million, said Alka Nayyar, spokeswoman for the Department of Central Management Services.

It's a point of pride for the campus, but also a responsibility, Glumac said. "People tend to rely on that," he said. "If we don't do our part to bring in that huge check every year, charities have additional hardship."

The UI drive provided \$797,300 of the United Way of Champaign County's \$3.3 million fund drive last year, according to Lyn Jones, president and CEO. The United Way launched its new campaign Sept. 1 with the goal again at \$3.3 million.

The 12,000-plus UI donors can direct payroll deductions to 11 charitable federations or agencies, including the United Way and Community Shares of Illinois, that include almost 650 different programs, said coordinator Shelley Mix of the Office of Public Engagement.

More on fund drive

<http://www.ccfid.illinois.edu>

<http://champaigncounty-ccc.org/>

<http://www2.illinois.gov/seca/Pages/default.aspx>

More than 200 individuals across campus are assigned as "leaders" for their units, rallying colleagues to make pledges no matter how small, she said.

"It's not necessarily how much you give," Mix said. "We're trying to get everyone to have a stake in it."

In a message to campus, Chancellor Robert Easter noted that UI employees have donated more than \$4 million over the past three years to local, state and national charities.

"That level of generosity on this campus defines the character of our campus," he wrote, urging employees to increase their giving if possible.

The Champaign County Combined Charities Campaign, which includes employees in county government and Champaign-Urbana's school districts, park districts and city governments, also started Monday. It raised \$157,500 last year.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Grant to help expand services to entrepreneurs

Funding to create community incubator in Rantoul linked to EnterpriseWorks

By **DON DODSON**
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More services for startup businesses will become available in Champaign-Urbana and Rantoul, as a result of a \$683,125 federal grant announced this week.

The five-year grant will enable founders of small businesses to take courses, get advice from experienced entrepreneurs and work alongside other small firms at both EnterpriseWorks in Champaign and the Rantoul Business Center.

The money — awarded by the Economic Development Administration,

a division of the U.S. Department of Commerce — comes in response to an application submitted by area organizations.

Collaborating on the project are EnterpriseWorks and the **University of Illinois** College of Business, working in cooperation with Parkland College, the Rantoul Business Center, the Champaign County Economic Development Corp.'s Small Business Development Center and the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission.

Specifically, the proposal calls for:

— Creating a community incubator in Rantoul that draws on the resources of EnterpriseWorks.

— Making Small Business Development Center counseling available at the Rantoul Business Center one day a week.

— Offering “FastTrac” entrepreneurial courses at the Rantoul Busi-

ness Center and at EnterpriseWorks.

— Building a student internship program that provides professional and technical services to entrepreneurs.

Laura Bleill, marketing coordinator at EnterpriseWorks, said the grant will allow EnterpriseWorks to offer its services to a broader audience of entrepreneurs — not just the high-tech companies that have offices there.

The grant will make community incubator space available at EnterpriseWorks, as well as at the Rantoul Business Center, she said.

Small businesses at both places will be able to take advantage of the “entrepreneur-in-residence” program at EnterpriseWorks, she added.

EnterpriseWorks already has four part-time entrepreneurs-in-residence to work with startups, and the grant could allow recruitment of an additional consultant to help firms

apply for Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer grants, Bleill said.

As part of the project, the Champaign County Economic Development Corp. would provide Small Business Development Center counseling in Rantoul on a weekly basis, she added.

The grant will also help pay for FastTrac business development workshops in Champaign and Rantoul. Curriculum for FastTrac programs was developed by the Kansas City, Mo.-based Kauffman Foundation.

It's expected the course in Rantoul would be taught by Parkland College instructors, Bleill said.

Bleill said Parkland plans to use its entrepreneurial scholarship program to support students who want to take FastTrac training in Rantoul.

The grant would also enable the UI to expand its student entrepreneur shared-services program, in which

students provide services for companies in the UI Research Park.

Typical services include website development, logo development, market research, data analysis and social media development for companies, Bleill said.

Parkland students would also take part in the shared-services program, as part of the project.

The grant would also open up the Academy for Entrepreneurial Leadership's “Illinois Launch” mentoring program to a wider audience.

Two places in the Illinois Launch program would be reserved for community ventures each year, according to the grant application.

As part of the project, the UI College of Business plans to do an assessment of entrepreneurship in the region, with the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission helping with data analysis.

Posted at 08:30 AM ET, 09/21/2011

Survey: Admission directors increasingly favor 'full-pay' students

By Daniel de Vise

With revenue declining, college admission officials are looking harder for students who can pay full fare, according to a survey released today by Inside Higher Ed.

The 2011 Survey of College and University Admission Directors finds evidence that admission committees are not being quite so holistic — or impartial — as they claim.

Among all four-year colleges, the admission strategy “judged most important over the next two years” was to recruit more out-of-state students, a group that typically pays sharply higher tuition at public institutions. Private institutions don’t charge higher tuition to out-of-state students but do rely on international students, who often come from wealthy families and pay the full cost of attendance.

The survey found that recruiting larger numbers of “full-pay” students, those who receive no financial aid, was viewed as a “key goal” at public institutions. Providing aid for low-income students was cited as a lower priority.

Dozens of colleges profess on their Web sites to a policy of admitting students without regard to financial need. Yet, the Inside Higher Ed survey found that 10 percent of four-year colleges reported admitting full-pay students with lower grades and test scores than other admitted students.

Roughly one-quarter of admission directors reported pressure from someone — college administrators, trustees or fund-raisers — to admit a student irrespective of her or his qualifications to attend. Admission preferences made big news recently two years ago at the University of Illinois.

Even at community colleges, a sector known for full access, one-third of admission directors said admitting full-pay students was “an important strategy.” Two-thirds said their central focus remains serving students who lack financial resources.

One-fifth of admission directors reported using commission-based agents to recruit international students, a practice that is widely regarded as unethical. Nearly half said they believed such agents help their clients fabricate information, such as admission essays written by others.

By Daniel de Vise | 08:30 AM ET, 09/21/2011



End tuition break for children of college workers

By The Pantagraph Editorial Board | Posted: Tuesday, September 20, 2011 7:00 am

One of the perks of being a university employee is getting a break on your child's tuition.

If you've worked at one or more Illinois public universities for at least seven years, your child will get a 50 percent discount on their tuition.

Fees aren't included in the waiver and you still have to pay the other half of the tuition, but that's still a nice benefit — and it's one that should be reviewed as universities grapple with tighter finances.

Last year, 286 children of Illinois State University employees attending an Illinois public university took part in the tuition reduction program — which is valid at any Illinois public university, not just the one where the parent works. One hundred students receiving reduced tuition under this program attended ISU. These figures were provided by university officials.

Students must qualify for admission to the university like anyone else and must be under 25 to be eligible. This is a statewide program, so it will take state legislative action to end it.

Senate Minority leader Christine Radogno, R-Lemont, introduced a bill this year that would have eliminated this program for future employees. However, Senate Bill 1318 went nowhere.

The tuition-reduction program is seen as a tool for recruiting and retaining faculty and staff. But its effectiveness is difficult to measure. Would removal of this benefit be a deal breaker when attempting to hire staff or professors? Clearly, those with children who might be attending college seven or more years from now would find it attractive. But we suspect other factors would play a bigger role.

Just because such a benefit has been offered for a long time, that alone is not sufficient justification for its continuation — especially when public universities should be looking for every possible way to keep expenses in check.

When economic times were better, there may have been good reasons for this program. But that's no longer the case.

Radogno should continue to push for repeal of this program.



News

Senate Budget Would Preserve Pell

September 21, 2011

WASHINGTON -- A Senate subcommittee on Tuesday approved a budget for the Education Department in fiscal year 2012 that would again preserve the maximum Pell Grant at \$5,550 -- this time at the expense of subsidized interest on undergraduate student loans during a six-month period after students leave college.

The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies voted 10-8, along party lines, for a \$68.4 billion allocation for the Education Department in the 2012 fiscal year, which would represent an \$80 million increase from 2011. The full Appropriations Committee will vote on the measure today.

In preserving the maximum Pell Grant, the subcommittee upheld the Obama administration's top priority in education funding for the upcoming fiscal year. Subcommittee staff did not release full details of the spending measure Tuesday. But it appeared to preserve funding at 2011 levels for several programs important to higher education, including Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants, federal work-study programs and the TRIO program, in addition to the maximum Pell Grant. It would also continue \$100 million in funding for the Workforce Innovation Fund, which is intended to help improve job training programs, including some at community colleges.

The bill would also provide \$30.5 billion for the National Institutes of Health, a cut of \$190 million from 2011, and create a new center, the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, dedicated to applying biomedical research to cure diseases.

The 2011 budget "cut all the fat and went into the bone," Senator Tom Harkin, an Iowa Democrat and the committee's chairman, said at the beginning of the subcommittee's markup Tuesday. "In this bill, we get into the marrow." Still, he listed the preservation of the maximum Pell Grant as a major accomplishment.

The deal reached in August to raise the federal debt ceiling included funding for Pell Grants, guaranteed in part by ending subsidized loans for graduate students. But the program still required some discretionary spending to close a projected shortfall for 2012.

The budget the panel approved Tuesday would cover that shortfall by ending the current practice of the government paying the interest that accrues on undergraduates' loans in the six months after they leave college, after which they must begin repaying their loans. Under the proposed change, borrowers would still have the six-month grace period before repayment begins, but they would be responsible for the interest that accrued during that time.

The change would save the government slightly less than \$6 billion over 10 years.

Subsidized interest during the grace period is the latest program to be sacrificed to keep Pell Grants alive, following subsidized graduate loans, year-round Pell Grants, and LEAP grants, which provided grants to states for need-based financial aid.

Several higher education advocates said they did not want to comment on the budget until full details are released after today's committee vote. While they said they were very pleased with the outcome for Pell Grants, some said they were concerned about paying for the measure in part by making subsidized loan borrowers pay more.

"Obviously we're now in the trend of looking for offsets from Pell authorization or other student aid provisions to pay for Pell Grants,"

said Cynthia Littlefield, director of federal relations at the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities. "There does come a point when there are no provisions left to utilize." Still, she praised the subcommittee for appearing to preserve most higher education programs in a difficult budget situation.

The federal fiscal year ends Sept. 30, meaning spending bills for 2012 are on a tight deadline. A continuing resolution that would provide funding through Nov. 18 is expected to be voted on this week, and would give Congress a few more weeks to consider an omnibus spending bill for 2012.

— Libby A. Nelson

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News

Know Thine Audience

September 21, 2011

NEW YORK CITY – They are students, they are faculty members. They are hobbyists and autodidacts.

They still prefer to read texts in print, but they are intrigued by the possibilities of digital, especially when it comes to scanning huge swaths of text for key words and phrases. They travel in herds and pledge allegiance to tribes; their social instincts are stronger than their market instincts. Their actions speak louder than their survey responses.

The most studious among them can be reasonably expected to read around 1,700 books in their lifetimes (unless they are Winston Churchill, in which case they might crack 5,000 -- or at least claim to). Give them the right tools, and they might distill the content of thousands more through quantitative analysis and concept mapping. Give them the right incentives, and they can help you build those tools. Make it into a game, and they can discover galaxies.

They are "users" -- of libraries, books and websites. And they were the focus of this year's ITHAKA Sustainable Scholarship conference here. The above, according to the invited speakers, are some of their attributes.

Libraries and publishers trying to learn more about their patrons is nothing new. But this year's ITHAKA conference took special aim at how the stewards of scholarly communications might dig into the essential motivations and tendencies of their digital readers in hope of not only serving them as consumers of existing scholarship, but using them as instruments to create new scholarship.

Complex Subjects

Users have lately become both an asset to scholarship and an object of it. Most recently, a consortium of Illinois universities, known as ERIAL, conducted a series of anthropological studies of undergraduates that revealed, in excruciating detail, the ignorance of many students with regard to academic research processes, and how some professors and librarians have unwittingly perpetuated that ignorance. On Tuesday, Susan Gibbons, the university librarian at Yale University, described the findings of an anthropological study she led at the University of Rochester that predates the ERIAL study.

Beginning in 2003, Gibbons and her colleagues in the Rochester library undertook a series of ethnographic studies aimed at answering a few vexing questions.

One such question was: What are some barriers for graduate students as they try to complete their dissertations?

What they found was that understanding how to get students and faculty to use helpful tools was as important as providing them those tools in the first place, and much more complicated.

Gibbons and her colleagues asked graduate students: If they had a magic wand that could create any tool to help them with their dissertation, what would it be? "Over and over again, we were hearing, 'I want a tool that will help me with citations and bibliographies and references,'" Gibbons said.

"We thought, 'Terrific, this is an easy solution, because it already exists in the marketplace, with RefWorks, or EndNote,'" she continued. "So we got site licenses for those products. We then did the exercise again: If you had a magic wand to make a tool, what would it be? 'Something to help with my citations, my references, my bibliographies.'"

Gibbons and her colleagues decided the problem was insufficient marketing. So they did a marketing campaign. Then they asked the same question again -- and, alas, got the same answer. So they pointed to the tools and asked students why they weren't using them.

"It turned out that when our students had started their dissertation writing, their work practices were set," Gibbons said. "It was too risky [for them] at that point to introduce something new into the process, particularly a new tool like this -- a technology that could just go haywire and then the whole dissertation goes down with it. So we were introducing it at the wrong time. We needed to be marketing it to students who had just arrived on campus, so they could use it in their early papers and by the time they got to their dissertation it was part of their toolbox."

Francois Gossieaux, a business consultant and co-founder of the marketing firm Human 1.0, also emphasized an anthropological approach when seeking to understand and direct the behavior of users. While librarians and publishers tend to regard audiences in demographic terms, the associations that actually drive user behavior are far narrower, Gossieaux said.

Anthropology teaches us that people are tribal, he said. They act as members of small, specific social groups; not large, generalized consumer blocs.

Gossieaux described an experiment in which subjects were asked to help with an open-ended number of tasks. One group was asked to complete the tasks as a favor to a friend. A second group was asked to help with the tasks in exchange for \$5. The third group was asked to help in exchange for 50 cents. The group that was given \$5 completed more tasks than the group that was given 50 cents, Gossieaux said. But the first group, the subjects who were asked for help not as a quid pro quo but as a favor to a friend, completed more tasks than either of the other groups.

"You should always try to tap into people's social framework rather than their market framework, because it's much more powerful," he said.

The Power and the Crowd

The power of crowds can yield astonishing advances for researchers who manage to caress the right nerves. So testified Ben Vershbow, manager of an experimental technology lab at the New York Public Library (NYPL), and Chris Lintott, an astrophysicist at the University of Oxford.

Vershbow and his colleagues have been harnessing the power of crowds to analyze New York City restaurant menus from the early 20th century. The NYPL has about 20,000 of them in its archive. And while previous researchers have gleaned some insights into the city's culinary history by merely browsing through them, Vershbow really wants to do a computational analysis on the whole archive in hope of gleaning trends and insights that might be missed by a manual accounting.

Problem is, transcribing the 20,000 menus by hand would be too daunting a task for Vershbow and his small team at the NYPL lab. So he opened the archive to the public, inviting visitors to transcribe menus themselves. Foodies came in droves. As it turns out, the project met a certain set of criteria essential to any crowdsourcing project, Vershbow said: that the task at hand be "discrete, delightful and unambiguous." Since the library opened the menu archive, it has drawn more than 3 million unique visitors, who have transcribed more than 10,000 menus.

Lintott's crowdsourcing project is in many ways even more impressive. The users of his [Galaxy Zoo](#) project have not only helped Lintott and his colleagues classify hundreds of thousands of faraway galaxies photographed by the Sloan Digital Sky Survey, a telescope that took pictures of the night sky for eight years -- they actually discovered a new class of galaxy.

"Having that much data creates problems," Lintott said. "...You can give a student about 50,000 galaxies [to classify] before they tell you where to stick the others."

So Lintott turned to amateur astronomers to help sort the galaxies into three known categories -- spiral, elliptical, and irregular. "I thought it would get a few thousand classifications a month," he said. Two days after launching, the online volunteers were classifying galaxies at a rate of 70,000 per hour. With many different users assessing the same images, each galaxy was classified by consensus, with the volunteers checking each other's work.

One tribe of about 20 users took to trading puns about a recurring type of galaxy that appeared small, round, and green in the eye of the telescopic photos. They called the strange galaxies "peas," and themselves the "peas corps." When (and only when) a member of the corps discovered a new pea-like galaxy, they celebrated with a new pea-related pun, thus creating the sort of gaming element that Lintott -- and other speakers here -- noted is often an essential element in a successful crowd-sourcing project.

"Without our input," said Lintott, "the 'peas corps' systematically found these things, noticed they were the same color, recruited a computer programmer who wrote a database... [for] the 16,000 things that were this color, built their own website to sort through those 16,000, had a teleconference to decide what qualified these things [as 'peas'], downloaded more data from the survey, reinvented the concept of signal-to-noise, because they needed a particular detection -- then sent me an e-mail saying, 'We've discovered a new class of galaxy.'"

But Lintott cautioned that despite Galaxy Zoo's success, leveraging the wisdom of crowds is hardly an exact science. Without the right incentives, researchers might not get the critical mass of volunteers they need to make a crowdsourced project work. Then again, "The Internet is a big place," he said. "Even if you're one in a million, there are a lot of you out there."

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— Steve Kolowich