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UIC administrators, trustees to work phones, contact CPS students

CHICAGO (STMW) – Trustees of the University of Illinois, the U of I's interim president and leaders of the Chicago campus will spend Saturday morning contacting Chicago Public Schools students who have been admitted at UIC to congratulate them and to encourage the students to follow through on their declared intention to enroll.

The telephone calls to more than 200 graduating CPS students and their families will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Saturday from Room 2850 in University Hall on the UIC campus, 601 S. Morgan St., a release from the university said.

Scheduled participants in the morning phonathon include:

- Board of Trustees chair Christopher G. Kennedy;
- Trustees Frances Carroll, James Montgomery, Carlos Tortolero and Dan Zavorotny, and University of Illinois Treasurer Lester McKeever;
- U of I interim President Stanley O. Ikenberry;
- UIC Chancellor Paula Allen-Meares, Provost Michael Tanner and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Barbara Henley.

Additional UIC administrators and alumni will be on hand to assist in responding to questions.

Saturday's effort is a pilot program aimed at getting more Chicago Public Schools students to enroll at UIC, the release said. The students to be contacted by University of Illinois leaders have accepted their offer of admission from UIC by returning their intent to enroll form by the May 1 deadline. UIC hopes to stem the usual 15 percent falloff among students who indicate their intent to enroll but fail to do so. Trustees and staff will answer questions about UIC academic programs and support services, as well as provide information about new-student orientation. The effort is consistent with a national drive to restore the U.S. to the top ranks of college attendance and graduation.

UIC, with about 16,000 undergraduates on its Near West Side campus, expects an incoming class of about 3,200 this fall.

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Report on Police Training Institute questions its place at UI

By *Paul Wood*
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CHAMPAIGN – A budget review report on the University of Illinois Police Training Institute says the unit does a good job of training officers, but has little connection to the UI's educational mission.

"There is not a strong, observable synergy between PTI^[1] and any academic unit on campus," said the report, released Friday. "PTI does not serve a core mission of a land-grant university. There is no justification to provide \$900,000 in annual university general revenue funding to train police officers. This high subsidy necessarily diverts money that is meant for more essential campus priorities."

The team also looked at cost savings.

"The institute maintains a full-time instructional staff of professional law enforcement educators. The project team explored the possibility of staffing PTI with adjunct or similar-contingent staff members," the report said.

The report is available [online](#)^[2] as a pdf file.

Fifteen teams were set up beginning in February to look for more efficient ways to run units, particularly smaller ones.

The PTI was established by state statute in 1955 (with an appropriation of \$30,000), and can only be removed from the UI by the [General Assembly](#)^[3].

However, the recession has cut deeply into municipal budgets, and the PTI is bringing in less revenue with fewer officers to train – resulting in a deficit of \$550,000 for the fiscal year.

On March 26, interim Chancellor Robert Easter and interim Provost Richard Wheeler asked a six-member team led by Michael LeRoy of the College of Law to look at the PTI to examine how it fits in the general mission of the UI, and whether its \$900,000 general revenue fund appropriation could be reduced.

They also asked whether the PTI could become entirely self-sustaining.

Michael Metzler, the associate director of the institute, said Friday that he and retiring director Krystal Fitzpatrick look at the report as an "opportunity" for the unit to find economies and partnerships that could improve its finances.

Metzler said the unit has been in a self-examination mode for almost 18 months, looking at "models for full-cost recovery."

He said the unit has had trouble in setting out future budgets because enrollment changes from year to year. For instance, this year, PTI will train about 175 police or correctional officers, compared to 600 the year before.

The number will have to pick up again soon, Metzler said, because cities and prisons in all 102 counties have cut back and will need to train new officers when the dragging economy picks up. (PTI does not train officers from Chicago and Cook County, which have their own training.)

"We are looking at this as an opportunity to evaluate what improvements we can make to be better stewards of university money, and whether we can make those improvements and still deliver high-quality training," he said.

The report, which is based partly on letters of support from police agencies, says PTI is good at what it does. Part of the UI's mission is to perform community service, and Metzler said PTI is one of the best examples of that at the Urbana campus.

However, the report noted that while a 2007 law restated the UI's obligation to train police through PTI, it "made no appropriation for that purpose."

"This high subsidy necessarily diverts money that is meant for more essential campus priorities. It insulates PTI from becoming a more market-sensitive actor," the report said. It suggested the UI could reduce its contribution if enrollment grew and another institution matched the campus contribution.

"It is possible for PTI to become a full cost-recovery unit. If that occurs, the need for a campus allocation might be reduced further or eliminated. PTI must continue in fiscal year 2011 to restructure its high-cost delivery model, and develop a plan to become a full-cost recovery unit," the report said.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Champaign center hoping for a rescue

By **DON DODSON**

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CHAMPAIGN — The Small Business Development Center in Champaign could go out of business itself if a rescue doesn't come soon.

The center, which provides counseling and education to people who want to start businesses or expand them, has been operating in Champaign-Urbana for more than a decade.

Bill Wilkinson has been the counselor most of those years, operating from an office within the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce space at 1817 S. Neil St., C.

The center depends on federal dollars funneled through the state and a local match. But **University of Illinois** Extension, which has provided the match, has indicated it won't do so beyond June 30.

Wilkinson, an Extension educator, said he was informed of the pending closure about two weeks ago and is planning to pack up the office at the end of the month, unless he hears otherwise.

In the meantime, the state Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity has put out a request for proposals from groups interested in providing the local match.

The federal allocation amounts to \$124,000, and whoever provides the local match must supply 75 cents for every federal dollar — or \$93,000.

The Champaign County Economic Development Corp. has responded to the request, offering to make that amount available through a combination of cash and in-kind services, according to Erik Kotewa, the group's deputy director.

But the economic development group hasn't heard back from the state yet.

"I'm assuming if they get the grant, things won't change much," Wilkinson said, adding



WILKINSON

that he expects the economic development group to know by the end of June.

Wilkinson said his office works with about 250 people a year, with roughly two-thirds of them wanting to start businesses and the other third already in business.

"We do a lot of workshops on how to start a business, how to write a business plan, analyzing financial statements," he said.

Counseling is free, and Wilkinson is available for appointments from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. For appointments, call 378-8535.

Wilkinson has a long history of advising businesses. He was involved in the Small Business Development Center when it was at Parkland College in the 1980s. Later, the University of Illinois took over the Small Business Development Center in Decatur and opened a satellite office in Champaign. Wilkinson once served as the center's director. He then retired, but returned as an Extension educator.

In April, UI Extension announced it would close several offices and eliminate positions across the state as the result of a budget shortfall of several million dollars.

Robert Hoeft, the UI's interim associate dean for extension and outreach, was not available for comment Friday on the scheduled closing of the Small Business Development Center.

Nigel Austin, UI Extension's regional director for East Central Illinois, said "the closing has to do with what the organization as a whole is going through. ... Obviously it's because of the financial situation that exists."

Where Blagojevich has a strong case

(<http://www.southtownstar.com/news/mcqueary/2354838,060610mcqueary.article>)

June 6, 2010

By Kristen McQueary

The thing about Rod Blagojevich is he isn't crazy. Even in his last-minute, final performance as governor testifying in his own defense during the state Senate's impeachment hearings, Blagojevich's colleagues described his speech as spellbinding, mesmerizing and "incredible." He wasn't able to persuade them of his innocence, but one sympathetic juror in his federal corruption trial? It's quite possible.

"I stand before you in a very unique and lonely place," Blagojevich said Jan. 29, 2009, as he addressed the state Senate on the final day of his impeachment trial.

He claimed his only crimes were trying to expand health care to the poor and the elderly. He said he might have been guilty of "pushing too hard and caring too much."

Frankly, he was impeached under a series of articles that didn't create cause for impeachment. For example, Blagojevich was accused of trying to import \$100,000 of flu vaccine and expanding FamilyCare without legislative approval. The impeachment articles were a mirage. He was removed from office because, two months earlier, he had been arrested in a federal government corruption probe.

But his defense then seems to mirror his defense now - that his actions were no different than the political bartering in which every elected official participates.

So let's explore that a bit further, based on what we know so far.

Blagojevich may be able to convince a jury he was not attempting to line his own pockets at any time. Rather, he will make the distinction that he was trying to build up his campaign fund, not his personal checking account. Campaign funds cannot be spent on personal use, such as mortgages, vacations or fancy cars. State law prohibits it. Building up a campaign fund is not equivalent to enriching oneself.

Additionally, the fact remains that special interest groups donate money to politicians because they expect politicians to advance legislation they want. Often, the special interest groups write the legislation themselves, hand it off to a lawmaker and write a check to the elected official's golf outing.

So while it's offensive that Blagojevich wanted to squeeze a hospital official for a political contribution, it could be argued it's part of the process. The official, Patrick Magoon, heads one of Springfield's most powerful lobbying groups, the Illinois Hospital Association. Magoon regularly donates to campaigns.

Blagojevich was about to sign legislation funneling more than \$8 million in reimbursements to doctors who treat poor children, an initiative the hospital association wanted.

So Blagojevich prodded his chief of staff to prod Magoon to write a check to his campaign.

I'm telling you: Fundraising at the highest levels is an inherently, ethically unpure process.

And just because the hospital official believed he was being extorted doesn't mean he was, in fact, being extorted - although the tapes suggest Blagojevich was prepared to cross the line.

Critical to his case will be the credibility of his best friend, Lon Monk. A college buddy who stood in Blagojevich's wedding, Monk is expected to connect dots that lead beyond Blagojevich's fundraising operation. Monk is expected to testify that even before the governor was elected in 2002, Blagojevich, Monk and others concocted schemes to enrich themselves.

Those conversations are not on tape, however. It will be Monk's word against Blagojevich's. Something tells me Blagojevich will be more convincing. He has had more practice.

As for the U.S. Senate appointment, prosecutors and the media have continued to use the word "sell," as if Blagojevich hung a price tag on the seat and planned to deposit a check into his personal account.

In reality, the more accurate description, based on transcripts I've read, show that Blagojevich was trying to trade the seat. He wanted to trade the appointment for a job for himself or his wife. He wanted political contributions for his campaign fund.

Again, politicians "trade" all the time. Their transactions involve money, jobs and appointments.

A lawmaker who wants to cap medical malpractice judgments? Well, it's no surprise the doctors want to throw him a fundraiser.

"You know, my wife is highly qualified for a state job" might be a subject that arises in a governor's office during a conversation about the state budget.

"Hey, my kid didn't get into [University of Illinois](#). Can you help?" could be a constituent service request, followed by the constituent attending a \$25-a-ticket fundraiser for the politician during the next election.

"I've got a great person to serve on Metra's board of directors. Now, how much did you say you need?"

The days of picking up the phone and trading favors - well, it's politics. It is.

Do you really think Rahm "dead fish" Emanuel can testify honestly that he doesn't engage in bartering, squeezing and manipulating? That he doesn't mix government and campaigns? That he never held purse strings over the heads of unruly House Democrats?

Prosecutors will try to convince the jury Blagojevich went too far, that he broke the law by scheming to defraud the state of honest service.

If they can prove he did, there ought to be a long line of politicians facing indictments as well.

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Grads need sound plan to repay student loans



TERRY SAVAGE
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Millions of college graduates are about to ask this question: Was it worth it? And it's a question that students just entering college should be asking as they start looking at taking out student loans to finance their college degree.

It's not the education, or the college experience that's the issue. It's how you will repay those student loans.

Today's college graduates enter a job market that has few jobs available. Yet, within months of graduation, they must work out a plan to repay the loans that made their degree possible. Those loans now look like the worst deal they could have made, because many carry high fixed rates of 6.8 percent, or more.

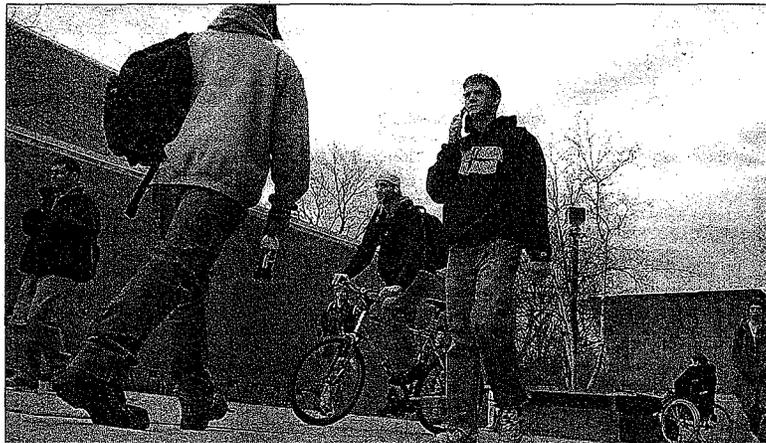
Even a fixed-rate 30-year mortgage would cost less than 5 percent annual interest these days. Plus that mortgage interest is deductible. And if your mortgage loan doesn't work out, you could always default.

But student loans stay with you for the rest of your life. Not even bankruptcy can wipe out this obligation. And since the government has guaranteed those loans, they will find a way to catch up with you.

Tough choices

The time to think about repayment is immediately after graduation. If you don't make some decisions within six months of graduating, those decisions will be made for you. Standard repayment on a federal student loan provides level monthly payments that cover accruing interest and a portion of principal. This program actually pays off your loans in the shortest amount of time.

To get an idea of what those payments will be, go to



Graduates should know that bankruptcy won't wipe out student loan obligations. | AP

www.SallieMae.com and click on the "monthly loan payment calculator."

Most grads will be overwhelmed by the payment — especially if they haven't landed a job. For example, if you have \$30,000 in student loans, you'd have to pay as much as \$345 every month for 10 years.

But there are ways to defer, extend, and otherwise lower that monthly payment. Just be aware that the longer you take to repay the loan, the more interest you will be paying. That can double or triple the amount you'll repay over the long run.

The newest option is called IBR — income-based repayment. You must demonstrate financial hardship to qualify. It caps the bill at 15 percent of discretionary income. After 25 years, if the balance has not been repaid, you may be eligible for forgiveness of the remaining loan balance.

The most important thing to remember is that you should contact your student loan lender immediately after graduation. You'll probably want to consolidate your loans, but check all your options because subsidized federal student loans carry different rates, and some may be lower than the consolidation rate being offered.

For example, loans disbursed before July 1, 2008, may carry

that high, fixed 6.8 percent rate, but loans made for the year starting July 1, 2008, carry a 6 percent rate. And loans made after July 1, 2009, are 5.6 percent. New loans, disbursed after this coming July 1, carry a fixed 4.5 percent rate.

All unsubsidized loans carry the fixed 6.8 percent rate! So be sure to check carefully the rate that applies to your loan — and the consolidation rate. And note that PLUS loans made to parents carry a floating rate, currently 3.23 percent.

Here are two Web sites that will help you understand your loan repayment options:

- ◆ www.SallieMae.com.
- ◆ www.SimpleTuition.com.

Starting college? Warning!

For all those just starting down the road to student loans, here are several warnings. The loan process has just changed — cutting out the bank lenders as middlemen. So you'll be working through your college financial aid office to get loans directly from the federal government student loan program.

If you've qualified, these federal loans are your best choice. If your parents are going to help, they'll have to decide between a home-equity loan or a PLUS loan, both of which carry floating interest rates — and could rise rapidly.

There are also many private student loan plans offered. Most carry floating rates. And here's where the warning comes in. It's a strange quirk that could cost you a fortune in the future. Make sure you understand the "index" to which your floating rate loan is tied. Many choose the LIBOR rate — the London Interbank Offered Rate. Typically that's about the same as U.S. Treasury bills, and they historically have moved in tandem.

But now, with debt woes in Europe, LIBOR has moved sharply higher vs. short-term U.S. Treasuries. And any loans tied to LIBOR will adjust upward sharply, while those tied to either U.S. Treasury bills (or a "cost of funds" index based on what banks are paying on savings deposits) are likely to adjust downward.

Yes, it's exciting to head off to college. But make careful borrowing choices now, or you'll be paying for your education, as well as benefitting from it, for the rest of your life. That's the Savage Truth.

Terry Savage is a registered investment adviser and a co-host of "Monsters and Money in the Morning" on WBMM-Channel 2 from 5 to 7 a.m. weekdays.

Comment at suntimes.com

Student Immigrants Use Civil Rights-era Strategies

by Russell Contreras, Associated Press, June 3, 2010

BOSTON – They gather on statehouse steps with signs and bullhorns, risking arrest. They attend workshops on civil disobedience and personal storytelling, and they hold sit-ins and walk out of class in protest. They're being warned that they could even lose their lives.

Students fighting laws that target undocumented immigrants are taking a page from the civil rights era, adopting tactics and gathering praise and momentum from the demonstrators who marched in the streets and sat at segregated lunch counters as they sought to turn the public tide against racial segregation.

“Their struggle then is ours now,” said Deivid Ribeiro, 21, an illegal immigrant from Brazil and an aspiring physicist. “Like it was for them, this is about survival for us. We have no choice.”

Undocumented students, many of whom consider themselves "culturally American" because they have lived in the U.S. most of their lives, don't qualify for federal financial aid and can't get in-state tuition rates in some places. They are drawing parallels between themselves and the 1950s segregation of Black and Mexican-American students.

“I think it's genius," said Amilcar Shabazz, chairman of the W.E.B. DuBois Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts. “If you want to figure out how to get your story out and change the political mood in America, everybody knows the place to start your studies is the civil rights movement.”

For two years, Renata Teodoro lived in fear of being deported to her native Brazil, like her mother, brother and sister. She reserved her social contact for close friends, was extra careful about signing her name anywhere, and fretted whenever anyone asked about her immigration status, because she been living illegally in the United States since she was 6.

Yet on a recent afternoon, Teodoro gathered with other illegal immigrants outside the Massachusetts Statehouse with signs, fliers and a bullhorn then marched the streets of Boston, putting herself in danger of arrest by going public but hoping her new openness would prompt action on the DREAM Act, a federal bill to allow people like her a pathway to citizenship via college enrollment or military service.

“I don't care. I can't live like this anymore,” said Teodoro, 22, a leader of the Student Immigration Movement and a part-time student at UMass-Boston. “I'm not afraid, and I have to take a stand.”

The shift has been building, said Tom Shields, a doctoral student at Brandeis University in Waltham who is studying the new student movement.

“In recent months, there has been an interest in connecting the narrative of their struggle to the civil rights effort for education,” Shields said.

The movement has gained attention of Congress. Sens. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., and Richard Lugar, R-Ind., sent a letter to Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano in April, asking her to halt deportations of immigrant students who could earn legal status under DREAM, which stands for the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors act, and which they're sponsoring.

Last month, three illegal immigrant students demanding to meet with Arizona Sen. John McCain about DREAM were arrested and later detained for refusing to leave his Tucson office. High school and college students in Chicago and Denver walked out of class this year to protest Arizona's tough new law requiring immigrants to carry registration papers. In December, immigrant students staged a "Trail of Dreams" march from Miami's historic Freedom Tower to Washington, D.C., to raise support for DREAM.

Similar student immigrant groups have sprung up at the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Houston.

By attaching themselves to the civil rights movement, Shabazz said, the immigrant students can claim the moral high ground and underdog status of the debate.

“The question now is ... can they convince moderate, middle-of-the-road, independent voters to support them?” he said.

The Rev. William Lawson, an 81-year-old civil rights leader and retired pastor of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church in Houston, called the student activists' tactics courageous and said he'd like to meet them. But Lawson, who marched with Martin Luther King Jr., cautioned student immigrant activists to prepare for peers getting arrested, deported or possibly killed.

“You do have to expect consequences. Many civil rights activists faced injury, sometimes death,” said Lawson. “And I'm not sure how many of these (students) understand the fundamental philosophy of nonviolence.”

Students have to keep in mind the audience they're trying to win over, said Lonnie King, 73, a founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the group responsible for sit-ins at segregated restaurants across the South in the 1960s.

“They need to understand that the bulk of folks are in the middle,” King said. “They have to coach their message to make it broadly appealing.”

In Massachusetts, hundreds of student activists have gone through training by Marshall Ganz, a public policy lecturer at Harvard Kennedy School and a former organizer with the late Cesar Chavez of the United Farm Workers movement. At special camps, students attend workshops on civil disobedience, storytelling and media outreach.

Students who have attended the workshops even continue to use the well-known farm workers' rallying clap at the end of organizing meetings.

“They know that clap,” Ganz said, “because I taught them that clap. It's all about the experience.”

Teodoro said the training changed her life and showed her the cause was larger than herself.

During the rally last week in Boston, she led a march from the Massachusetts Statehouse to Sen. Scott Brown's office at the John F. Kennedy federal building, which also houses U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement offices. Along with Carlos Savio Oliveira, 22, of Falmouth, Mass., another illegal immigrant, the pair walked into the federal building to hand Brown's staff 1,500 letters of support for the DREAM Act.

Outside supporters wore T-shirts with the words “Brown is beautiful” a pun referring to the Chicano movement chant and Brown's well-publicized nude photo spread in *Cosmopolitan* magazine as a college student.

Brown, whose office was previously the site of a sit-in by the same group, has not said whether he supports the bill.

In September, Teodoro and a dozen other students also took a weeklong trip from Boston to the South, with Shields driving.

Along the way, they met with Black former students who desegregated Clinton High School in Tennessee and Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas. They visited civil rights museums and filmed the journey for a planned documentary. But the highlight was meeting Carlotta Walls LaNier, a member of the Little Rock Nine.

Teodoro cornered LaNier at a book signing of her memoir, *A Mighty Long Way: My Journey to Justice at Little Rock Central High School*.

“I went up to her at the signing and told her my story and tried not to cry,” Teodoro said. “She listened. Then, she hugged me.”

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May 30, 2010

An Adjunct's Summer Plight

By Isaac Sweeney

I'm writing this during my busiest week of the semester. It's so busy, my wife and I decided to give our 21-month-old son, Gavin, to his grandmother for the week. That isn't an easy thing to do for a couple of reasons. One is that we are young parents, and Gavin hasn't quite reached that age where we are tired of his antics, so it's hard not to have him around. The other reason is that his grandmother works full time and has to take the week off to keep Gavin.

Perhaps I should explain just how busy we are. First of all, my wife, Melanie, works a regular job. She is in a profession that helps people and helps the community, but her job exhausts her. I, on the other hand, have a less "regular" job. I am an adjunct faculty member in the School of Writing, Rhetoric, and Technical Communication at James Madison University, where I teach four first-year writing courses a semester, and I am an adjunct in the English department at Blue Ridge Community College, where I teach two more writing courses a semester. My regular classes ended last week, and this is finals week. Because I teach composition at both schools, I don't give a final exam. I am spending the week grading about 130 essays. It's an essay-reading, essay-grading marathon.

Strangely, I have already received my final paycheck from JMU for the semester. You see, JMU has decided to pay adjuncts over the winter break, which is great for Christmas. But when the end of the spring semester comes around, they don't pay me after regular classes end. I have one more paycheck coming from the community college.

Then, it's summer. (Cue scary-movie music.)

JMU's school of writing doesn't offer many courses over the summer. The ones it does offer are snatched up by the full-time faculty members. The community college offers a few more summer courses, but those are also taken by full-time faculty members; they get extra pay for teaching summer courses. Maybe these institutions don't realize, or care, that the full-time adjuncts around here, like

me, are out of work and out of income during the summer months.

I need a summer job. I have been applying for summer jobs since March. I had to turn down a U.S. Census position I had applied for because the job was during the semester, but then one opened up later, so now I've got a temp job for a few weeks. Last year I worked at a day-care center for minimum wage and 20 hours a week. Now I'll take just about anything. In fact, I have an interview coming up for a minimum-wage job landscaping. I could also probably work at the day-care center again, if it comes to that.

Part-time, minimum wage isn't really enough. My son is growing every day; he needs food, diapers, some clothes, and other things 21-month-olds can't live without. My debt is starting to catch up with me. Our 10-year-old minivan is on its last leg, and our 8-year-old Civic has a warning light on the dash that we can't seem to do anything about. My wife wears contacts but likes to put on glasses in the evening to let her eyes breathe. Her glasses broke six months ago, and we haven't been able to get another pair. Optimistically (foolishly?), we planned an inexpensive vacation this year—our first in three years—and now we regret the money we will have to spend for that trip. Some vacation.

Things aren't all bad, though. I have a family I love, including a healthy young son and a wife who lets me chase my dreams, as long as I don't do anything too crazy (though this is becoming a little too crazy). I have applied for some teaching jobs semi-nearby: a full-time spot at a different community college near Richmond, Va.; a writing-tutor position at Virginia State University; and a full-time contingent position at George Mason University, in northern Virginia. Desperate, I also put in an application at the private, military high school a few miles away, where I would get to wear a uniform and students would call me captain. I don't have a terminal degree, so it's not as if I expect tenure—I'll take a more permanent contingent spot. So far, I haven't heard from any of the schools.

You can probably tell that I am baffled and angry. I'm good at what I do. I'm a good writer, a good teacher, and even a good scholar. In the last faculty meeting of the semester at the university where I teach—I get to attend faculty meetings now because of a mild stink I raised aided, in part, by my *Chronicle Review* piece in October 2009—there was a lot of talk about "promotable" and "nonpromotable" positions. Should faculty members in nonpromotable positions get to vote on who gets tenure? And so on and so forth. Still new to faculty meetings, I just sat there, mostly confused. Apparently there was a policy e-mail that went around to some faculty members, and

the bulk of the meeting was about this e-mail. I didn't get the e-mail.

After the meeting, during my walk to class, I came up with a brilliant and painfully obvious idea. Why do we have to have promotable and nonpromotable positions? What is the benefit to our institution? If it's to save money, then that's a problem that reveals the priorities of the writing school and the university. If it's the standard "because that's the way it has always been," then we should change it, because that is always a bad argument. Shouldn't incentives exist for all faculty members? That just seems logical.

So, I'm baffled and angry because the institutionalized structure of academe seems outdated and dysfunctional, specifically when it comes to adjunct, contingent, and other "nonpromotable" faculty members. As the saying goes, if you have a good horse, you run it. I know a lot of good horses who don't get to run, or they only get to run in small, fenced-in yards. I'd like to think this problem exists only at my university, but, judging by the lack of response to my applications, nobody wants me as anything other than an adjunct unless I have a terminal degree, despite my experience and proven track record. I guess I'm good enough to teach a lot of students but not good enough to be fully involved.

As I cut other people's grass this summer, and struggle financially even though I have a white-collar job, and as my family chooses diapers for my son over glasses for my wife, I'll probably get angrier. Luckily, I can always write about it. Don't think I'm not grateful.

Isaac Sweeney lives in Verona, Va.

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