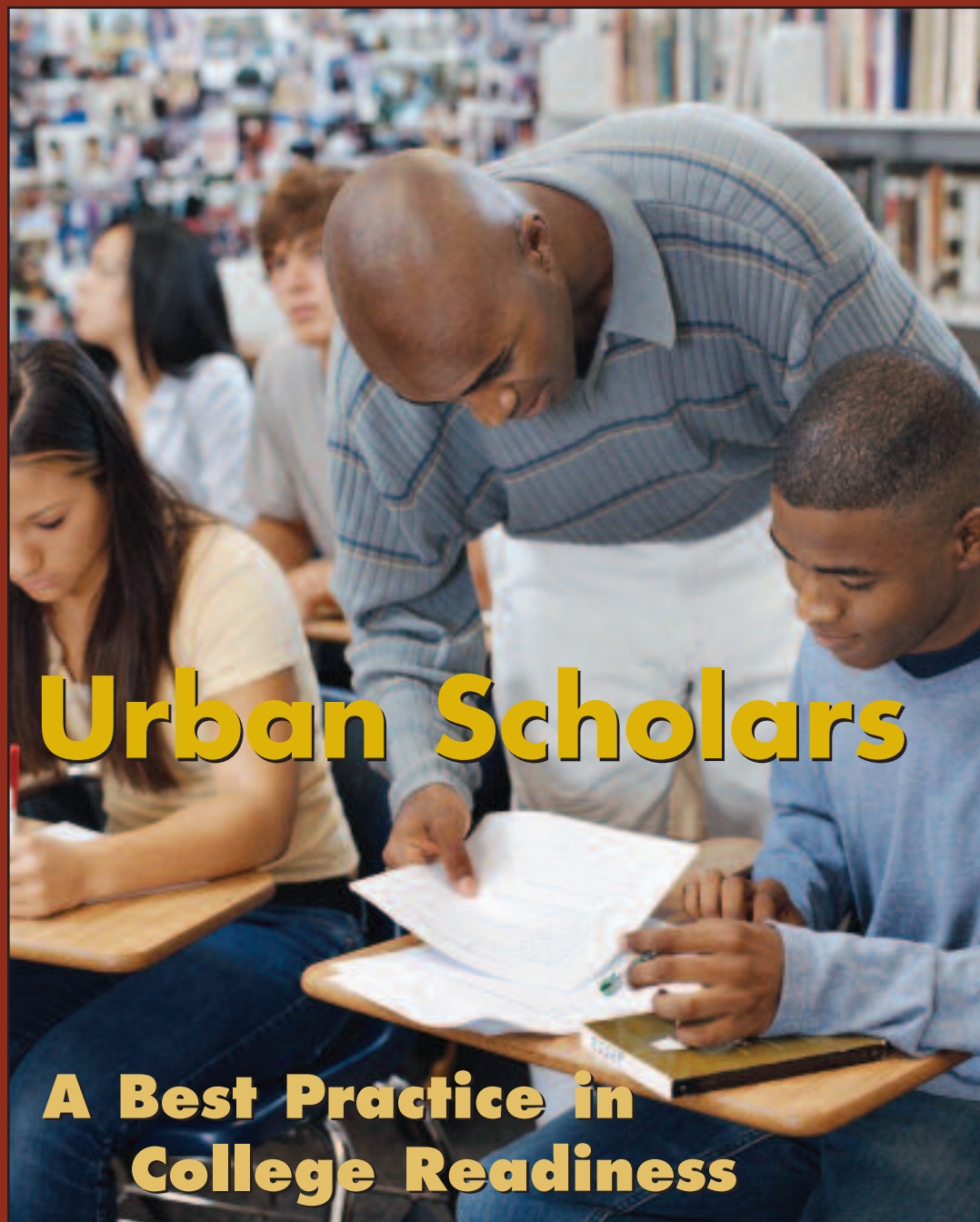


CONNECTION

THE JOURNAL OF THE NEW ENGLAND BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

20
Years of
CONNECTION



Urban Scholars

A Best Practice in College Readiness

VOLUME XXI
NUMBER 1
SUMMER 2006

Also inside:

- UConn's Formula for "Inclusive Excellence"
- A Once Mundane Administrative Issue Re-emerges as a Key Tool for Equity
- Community College Graduation Rates: Highs and Lows
- Student Debt: Earnings Premium or Opportunity Cost?
- A Summary of STEM Legislation



mefa

Easy Access

More than just a loan.

The financial aid process can be **overwhelming** for students and parents. MEFA was created by colleges for colleges to help make higher education more accessible. Our only shareholders are the colleges, universities, parents and students of Massachusetts. We work with our **college partners** and **Tuition Management Systems** to provide a low-cost, simplified and streamlined educational financing process.

Massachusetts Colleges and Universities

Through partnership with MEFA and Tuition Management Systems you can offer your students seamless, easy access to college financing, payment and financial planning needs. Plus we've got the expertise – and the programs – to “make the numbers work” for you and your students.



WE MAKE IT PERSONAL.

WE MAKE IT EASY.

WE MAKE IT HAPPEN.



TUITION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

*Helping Families Afford Education
Helping Schools Prosper*

Tuition Management Systems provides innovative options for payment of educational expenses.

- Objective affordability planning and counseling
- Interest-free monthly payment options
- Best-in class lending partnerships


mefa

Massachusetts Educational
Financing Authority

MEFA, a not-for-profit state authority dedicated to helping families and students finance higher education costs through affordable and convenient financing options.

- Lowest cost education loan programs offering fixed and variable rate options
- Faster, streamlined loan processing
- College planning programs for high school students and their families

For more information, call 800-842-1531, ext. 502 or visit mefa.org



The more financial choices your institution has today,
the more choices your students have for the future.

Public or private, your institution makes financial choices that affect students, faculty, alumni and the community. Choices that go beyond the administration building – into classrooms, lecture halls, labs, dorms and stadiums. Choices we've helped institutions make for decades.

YOUR CHOICE. YOUR CHASE.

Chase helps many of the country's largest colleges and universities enjoy growth and stability with investment, credit and cash management – options that can take an institution like yours wherever you choose to lead it.

Call Diane M. Genovesi at 212.899.1255.

CHASE 



At TERI, we believe that education is the key to prosperity and well-being for individuals and society.

- Helping students and families pay for their education
- Promoting access to higher education in our community
- Fostering partnerships and reforms to ensure that a college education is achievable for all



COVER STORIES

15 Preparing Urban Scholars for College

A Best Practice in College Readiness

Blenda J. Wilson

17 Inclusive Excellence

UConn Builds Capacity for
Diversity and Change

Damon A. Williams

20 Smooth Transfer

A Once Mundane Administrative Issue
Re-emerges as a Key Tool for Equity

Francesca B. Purcell

23 Community College Graduation Rates

New England's Community Colleges Serve as
Gateways to Opportunity. . . . But Could They
Be More Successful?

Jamie E. Scurry

24 CC Leader

Community Colleges Go Outside to Fill Key Posts

Barbara Viniar

COMMENTARY & ANALYSIS

26 Student Debt: Earnings Premium or Opportunity Cost?

Chuck O'Toole

28 A Summary of STEM Legislation

James T. Brett

29 Athletic IQ

Matching Students to Intercollegiate Athletics

Bryan E. Carlson

DEPARTMENTS

5 Editor's Memo

Thank You, Gadflies

John O. Harney

7 Short Courses

11 Message from the President

A Regional Plan for College Readiness

Evan S. Dobbelle

13 Message from the Chair

Nourishing Regional Relationships

Mary R. Cathcart

31 Books

Bok's Book *Our Underachieving Colleges*

reviewed by Joseph M. Cronin

32 Data Connection

Will New England have too few college graduates by the year 2020?



That's the question answered in a ground-breaking new study commissioned by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation and conducted by a team of experts from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and the University of Connecticut. The answer, and what it means for the region's prosperity, and levels of educational access and attainment, is examined in "**New England 2020**".

To read "**New England 2020**", visit www.nmefdn.org



Nellie Mae
Education
Foundation

Opening Doors to Tomorrow

1250 Hancock Street, Suite 205N • Quincy, MA 02169-4331
Tel. 781-348-4200 • Fax 781-348-4299

CONNECTION

THE JOURNAL OF THE NEW ENGLAND BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

CONNECTION: THE JOURNAL OF THE NEW ENGLAND BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION is published five times a year by the New England Board of Higher Education, 45 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111-1325
Phone: 617.357.9620 Fax: 617.338.1577
Email: connection@nebhe.org

Vol. XXI, No. 1 Summer 2006
ISSN 0895-6405
Copyright © 2006 by the New England Board of Higher Education.

Publisher: Evan S. Dobbelle
Executive Editor: John O. Harney
Senior Director of Communications:
Charlotte Stratton
Design and Production: tpgcreative, Boston, MA

Back Issues: Back issues of CONNECTION are accessible on the World Wide Web at www.nebhe.org/connectionarchives. Hard copies of regular issues may be purchased from NEBHE for \$3.95 each; annual directory issue, \$20.

For advertising information, contact Jodie LaBombard at jlalombard@nebhe.org.

CONNECTION is printed in New England.

CONNECTION is indexed and abstracted in EBSCOhost's Academic Search Elite, Academic Search Premier and Professional Development Collection, and indexed in the MLA International Bibliography and ERIC's Current Index to Journals in Education.

The New England Board of Higher Education is a nonprofit, congressionally authorized, interstate agency whose mission is to promote greater educational opportunities and services for the residents of New England. NEBHE was established by the New England Higher Education Compact, a 1955 agreement among the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.



Chair: Mary R. Cathcart, Senior Policy Fellow,
Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center

President: Evan S. Dobbelle

CONNECTION Editorial Advisory Board

Cathryn Addy
President, Tunxis Community College

Katherine Sloan
President, Massachusetts College of Art

Robert Whitcomb
Vice President and Editorial Pages Editor,
Providence Journal

Ralph Whitehead Jr.
Public Service Professor, University of Massachusetts

Robert L. Woodbury
Former Chancellor, University of Maine System

EDITOR'S MEMO

Thank You, Gadflies

On CONNECTION's 20th anniversary, a special thank you to the gadflies who have used our pages to rouse New England from complacency and, in the process, helped make NEBHE's journal a forum for tough ideas.

I'm thinking of people like former Cambridge, Mass., City Councilor Kathleen Born breaking from the usual giddiness surrounding higher education's economic impact to note how the spinoff economy in America's quintessential college town had spun out of control, sending housing costs beyond the reach of long-time residents and pushing out locally owned retail businesses. [Pomp and Whine: Can College Towns Keep the Sims Happy?, Winter 2005]

Or former University of Maine System Chancellor Bob Woodbury explaining how the *U.S. News & World Report* college rankings that colleges and parents followed like gospel were encouraging institutions to reject as many applicants as possible, avoid nontraditional students and favor quick fixes over long-term improvement. [How to Make Your College No. 1 in *U.S. News & World Report* and Lose Your Integrity in the Process, Spring 2003]

I'm thinking of author Peter Sacks, refusing to buy into the testing frenzy, noting that, "policymakers fall into a dangerous trap if they insist that achieving the coveted 'alignment' of standards between schools and colleges depends on expanding the use of high-stakes tests," and predicting that college faculty would soon confront "students who, though perhaps adequately trained in grammar and spelling, lack intellectual curiosity, creativity and initiative." [High-Stakes Sandwich, Fall 2001]

Or Kaileigh Tara, welfare mom turned mayor of Lewiston, Maine, urging New England's "opinion leaders" to seek greater public input in their decisions. "Policymakers should start by making a list of all those people whom instinct tells them should be involved in a decision," she wrote. "Then they should put that list aside and start over." [Who's Not at the Policy Table?, Spring 1999]

Before the term "college readiness" entered the lexicon, Northeastern University economists Paul Harrington and Andrew Sum had the gall to argue in CONNECTION that the chief barrier to college was not lack of money but lack of academic preparation. [Access Is About More than Money, Fall 1999] Bud Hodgkinson, America's leading education demographer, stepped back from the rhetoric about degree attainment to remind CONNECTION readers: "We have no idea how long graduates maintain the wisdom that has been jammed into their heads at such pain and expense." [Tunnel Vision, Spring 2004] Education Department analyst Cliff Adelman presented an arsenal of data puncturing popular views of grade inflation, graduation rates and "Culture Wars." [Putting on the Glitz, Winter 2001]

CONNECTION was meant to be edgy from the get-go. Just a year into publication, Bart Giamatti used his perch as Yale president to debunk a sacred tenet of New England higher education. "Please don't tell me that because of our extraordinary array of private institutions that we don't need to nourish the public ones," he wrote, noting that "very expensive private institutions" could not be counted on to attract brains and money to New England's increasingly high-tech economy. [Neglecting Our Own, Winter 1987]

A few years later, with all eyes focused on Asian Tigers and a unified European market, former NEBHE Senior Fellow Nate Bowditch urged New Englanders to embrace an unfolding "African miracle." [Is Africa the Future of New England?, Summer 1999] Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz exposed the p.c. movement of the day. [Speech Codes and Diversity Don't Mix, Summer 1991] Bryant College Professor William Haas asked, in the wake of the Bhopal and Space Shuttle Challenger disasters, why B-schools were not better preparing students for conflicts between company loyalty and loyalty to human life. [A New Measure of Success in Business, Spring 1991]

To be sure, CONNECTION plays a vital role as a forum for best practices in higher education, a vehicle for educational futurists and a purveyor of cutting-edge trend analysis ... all important. But New England's ongoing brain drain, legions of disconnected youth and propensity to rest on its laurels, if not its ivy, indicate the sacred cows need tickling. So thank you, gadflies.

John O. Harney is executive editor of CONNECTION. Email: jharney@nebhe.org

Plan wisely.



Build smart.



*Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and
Health Sciences, Boston Campus*

The Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences has been preparing the region's top health care professionals since 1823. But with national shortages in the health care workforce, the College needed to expand its student body, its academic offerings, and its physical space. School officials turned to us. We issued a \$51 million tax-exempt bond allowing them to expand and renovate their Boston and Worcester campuses, meeting the College's needs and the needs of the health care community. That's what we do. Our experienced team provides creative business solutions, tax-exempt bond financing, and loans at competitive rates to help nonprofits in Massachusetts grow. So give us a call. Because when it comes to smart financing and business solutions, we're your prescription for a successful project.



MASSDEVELOPMENT
Build. Create. Innovate.

160 Federal Street, Boston, MA 02110
800.445.8030 www.massdevelopment.com

Immigrant Workers

Immigrants have accounted for nearly all the growth in the Massachusetts labor force since the mid-1980s. Many work as house cleaners, floor refinishers and painters or in small businesses such as beauty salons and auto body shops where they are exposed to environmental toxins.

Recently, Tufts University's School of Engineering was awarded a four-year, \$899,644 grant by the National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health to study occupational health risks among immigrant workers in Somerville, Mass., the city on Tufts' doorstep that is home to 23,000 Brazilians, Haitians, Salvadorans and other foreign-born immigrants.

Tufts experts and local organizations will use public health surveillance data and detailed interviews to assess immigrants' exposure to work-related environmental toxins such as solvents and cleaning agents. And they will train bilingual young people to teach immigrant workers in their families and communities about occupational hazards and safe practices.

Tufts and partners will also launch a "nonprofit green cleaning cooperative" where immigrant workers can join together to learn about safe work practices and the benefits of using environmentally friendly cleaning products.

The idea is that Tufts expertise will empower Somerville's immigrants

to solve problems within the community. As Tufts assistant professor Raymond R. Hyatt Jr., puts it: "We are making a genuine transfer of critical expertise to our community partners."

Running Up That Hill

Colleges and universities struggle to diversify the professoriat because underrepresented minority faculty leave their jobs almost as fast as new ones can be hired, according to *The Revolving Door for Underrepresented Minority Faculty in Higher Education*, a report of the James Irvine Foundation Campus Diversity Initiative, which is coordinated by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and Claremont Graduate University in California.

The report analyzing faculty hiring and retention at 27 campuses in California, finds that the share of faculty who are African-American, Latino or Native American inched up from just 7 percent to 9 percent between 2000 and 2004, and nearly three of every five newly hired underrepresented minority faculty were simply replacing other underrepresented minority faculty who had left the institutions.

A Science Posse

Brandeis University chemist Irving Epstein was recently awarded a four-year, \$1 million grant from the

Howard Hughes Medical Institute to encourage more minorities to study science and medicine.

Epstein's plan is based on a successful Posse Foundation program that has been providing groups of inner-city students with full-scholarships to Brandeis, as well as intensive precollege training and continuing support once on campus. But very few of the Posse students go on to study science or medicine, according to Brandeis officials.

Epstein would modify the Posse selection criteria to better identify science aptitude among students and strengthen precollege academic training in science with a two-week science "boot camp" just before college starts. The university has earmarked more than \$2 million in scholarships for Epstein's program.

Epstein also plans to spice up dreaded general chemistry courses with more demonstrations, problem-solving, historical anecdotes, films and computer simulations, and fewer lectures, so students will be motivated, rather than turned off, by the introductory experience.

Converging

A series of trends ranging from the limited buying power of the Pell Grant to the use of tuition discounting by colleges and universities to shifting demographics are converging to restrict college opportunity, especially for underserved populations, according to a new report by the Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Higher Education Policy.

But a special New England supplement to *Convergence: Trends Threatening to Narrow College Opportunity in America* finds a silver lining in the region's demographic clouds.

"Student growth is not predicted to be as high as in other regions," note authors Lara K. Couturier and Alisa F. Cunningham. "While this could cause the institutions to com-

Twenty Years Ago in CONNECTION

"New England, with 5.3 percent of the nation's total population, had enrolled 8.9 percent of our foreign students in 1957-58 and 6.9 percent in 1984-85. ... Is this decline in New England leadership a matter of concern? We believe so, since an increasing international student enrollment and increased study abroad are a necessary adjunct to the increasing internationalization of the regional economy."

—The late NEBHE Research Fellow Richard G. King writing on "Are New England's Doors Still Open? Three Decades of Foreign Student Enrollment Trends," *CONNECTION*, Summer 1986



The Center for College Planning at the NHHEAF Network Organizations:



- Assistance with Financial Aid Forms
- College Planning Workshops
- Personalized College Counseling
- College Planning Library

Zanna, Chuck, Scott and Leslie are four of the expert college counselors at the NHHEAF Network Organizations.

Proud to bring NH the Best of College Planning Programming and Events:



Search for scholarships at
www.nh93.com



Questions about College?
Joe Knows.
www.askjoecollege.com



Personalized college counseling and library!



Destination College
www.destinationcollege.org



Expert presentations at no charge!



www.nhdiscoveru.org



www.nhheaf.org



College Equals Opportunity
www.nhceo.biz

1.800.525.2577 • www.nhheaf.org

pete more aggressively for out-of-state (and even out-of-country) students, New England's colleges and universities could better serve the region by making a commitment to develop the regional pipeline and reach out to local students who might not otherwise enroll."

How? The authors suggest the following:

- Link tuition increases at public institutions to that state's average increase in family income.
- Increase need-based aid programs so full awards can be made to all eligible students.
- Keep a large majority of state financial aid programs need-based, thereby ensuring that low-income students get college educations and contribute to economic and social development.
- If states do have academically based merit aid programs, ensure that they are sustainable and well-publicized and target the intended populations by employing income caps and prohibiting the replacement of state aid with Pell Grant dollars.
- Implement programs to reward public institutions that perform well in attracting and retaining low-income students and students of color.
- Shift the balance of institutional financial aid back to a primary emphasis on assisting those who are otherwise qualified but lack the financial resources to attend college.
- Encourage private-sector investment in need-based student aid. Also, tie privately funded scholarships and other programs to early intervention efforts to create a seamless support system from K-12 through attainment of a postsecondary degree.

Ambassador Class

For college students from the world's only superpower, study-abroad entails some new challenges.

To help them, the Providence, R.I.-based Glimpse Foundation has published a new set of study abroad "acclimation" guides in PDF format.

Among the titles: "American Identity Abroad," designed to help students cope with anti-Americanism overseas.

Future editions of the guides, which feature tips from returned study-abroad students, will focus on "Traveling Abroad as an American of Color," "Gender and Sexuality Issues Abroad" and "Living Abroad in a Developing Country."

For more, visit the Glimpse Foundation at www.glimpseabroad.org/guides.php.

Cloudy with Outages

Talk about a powerful example of higher ed's role in the economy ...

Plymouth State University meteorologists have been working with the Granite State electric utility, Public Service of New Hampshire, since 2004

to track which New England weather events, from snowstorms to heat waves, have caused power outages over the last 10 years and how to predict future problems.

In 2005, Plymouth State senior Michael Nahmias, as part of his senior project, identified which types of weather events knock out power. The worst culprits, he found, were not blizzards, but rather the wet heavy snow typical when temperatures are between 28 and 35 degrees Fahrenheit. Early fall and late spring wind storms wreaked havoc too.

This past year, another meteorology major, Bridget Bixby, began crunching the data to create a web-based decision tool that will allow the utility to ready an emergency response when the weather forecast suggests an outage is likely.

Correction

Figures 60, 61 and 63 in the "University Research" section of "Trends & Indicators in Higher Education, 2006" [CONNECTION, Spring 2006] contained several misplaced decimal points and zeros. For corrected tables and additional higher education data, please visit: www.nebhe.org/research. We regret the error.

The financial resource for not-for-profits.

Like your organization, Webster has a mission. Our is to *Find a Way* to help not-for-profits reach their financial goals. We understand your unique challenges and our dedicated not-for-profit specialists can offer you a full array of financial services tailored to managing your finances, people and risks.

Learn more about how Webster finds a way for not-for-profits. Contact **Nancy Riddle Scirocco, VP,**
Not-for-Profit Banking
at (860) 692-1619 or
nscirocco@websterbank.com.



WebsterOnline.com



The Webster Symbol and We Find a Way are service marks of Webster Financial Corporation. Webster and Webster Bank are registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender.



"Today at school
I learned yellow and red
make orange,
and how to get
tax-free withdrawals,
a wide range of
investment options,
and flexibility."

"I learned about the 529 *CollegeBoundfund*.

"I also learned how I can use it for any accredited higher education institution in the United States. Undergraduate or graduate, vocational or technical, all are included in this powerful way to prepare for college.

"You can also choose from a wide range of investment options to suit the individual investment styles of different investors. And, special gift and estate tax rules apply to section 529 plans, like *CollegeBoundfund*.

"Choose the 529 *CollegeBoundfund* for your child or grandchild. It's a gift that will last a lifetime."

CollegeBoundfund[®]

888 324-5057

www.collegeboundfund.com

You should consider the investment objectives, risks and charges and expenses of the CollegeBoundfund carefully before investing. For a free copy of the Program Description, which contains this and other information, visit our website at www.alliancebernstein.com, or call your financial representative or AllianceBernstein at (888) 324-5057. Please read the Program Description carefully before you invest.

If you are not a Rhode Island resident or if you have taxable income in another state, consider whether that other state offers a similar plan with favorable state tax income or other benefits not available if you invest in the *CollegeBoundfund*. Under a "sunset provision," the federal tax exemption for earnings on qualified withdrawals is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2010, unless extended by Congress. As with all tax-related decisions, consult your tax advisor. Statements in this material concerning taxation are not offered as individual tax advice. Investors should consult with their tax advisor or contact their state tax division for more information before investing.

The investments in the *CollegeBoundfund* ("CBF") are not guaranteed by the State of Rhode Island, or the Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority. The CBF is managed by Alliance Capital Management L.P. and distributed by AllianceBernstein Investment Research and Management, Inc., member NASD.

Investment Products Offered

Are Not FDIC Insured May Lose Value Are Not Bank Guaranteed



A Regional Plan for College Readiness

EVAN S. DOBELLE

The late urban activist Jane Jacobs knew well the connection between a vibrant city and a healthy economy. In her landmark work, *The Death and Life of Great Cities*, she observed, “Whenever and wherever societies have flourished and prospered rather than stagnated and decayed, creative and workable cities have been at the core of the phenomenon. ... Decaying cities, declining economies, and mounting social troubles travel together. The combination is not coincidental.”

The health of any city—or for that matter, any state or region—depends, in turn, upon the educational attainment of its residents. The more our New England students, urban and rural, earn college degrees and find good jobs, the better able they will be to build strong communities.

But recent studies suggest that New England is failing those students. Despite the quality of our colleges and universities, we lag behind the rest of the nation in making college available to minorities and students from working-class backgrounds. Our universities may be gateways to opportunity, but too many urban and rural youths and adults retooling for a new workplace cannot get in the door.

We delude ourselves if we imagine that this is not a serious problem, or if we think the welfare of New England will be ensured by the success of its most elite institutions, which educate only a small share of the region’s students. The global economy demands ever-increasing skills of all our workers, and the gaps in income and in quality of life continue to grow between those with college degrees and those without. Most good jobs formerly open to smart,

ambitious high school graduates now require a bachelor’s degree for entry. Each year, there are fewer avenues to success for those who have not attended college.

Some communities are suffering disproportionately under these pressures. Recent studies report unemployment as high as 50 percent among urban African-American men in their 20s without college degrees. Among those who didn’t finish high school, that number soars to 72 percent. With numbers like that, it is only a matter of time before a major crisis develops.

We must prepare and motivate our young people earlier and better for college so they will have a place in today’s economy. We need to listen to researchers who report that mandatory preschool for three-year-olds hugely enhances prospects for later success. We must celebrate and fully fund the mission of access and affordability of our community colleges in both occupational and transfer programs. And we must give our students the financial tools to afford a good education.

We also need to prepare for the approaching drop in our traditional high-school-age population. New England’s high school graduating class is projected to peak in 2008 and then begin a long decline. Meanwhile other parts of the country are getting younger; one of every four 18-year-olds lives in California. If New England is to stay economically competitive, we need more of our young people to succeed in college.

That is why the six New England states have joined forces with the New England Board of Higher Education to launch College Ready New England

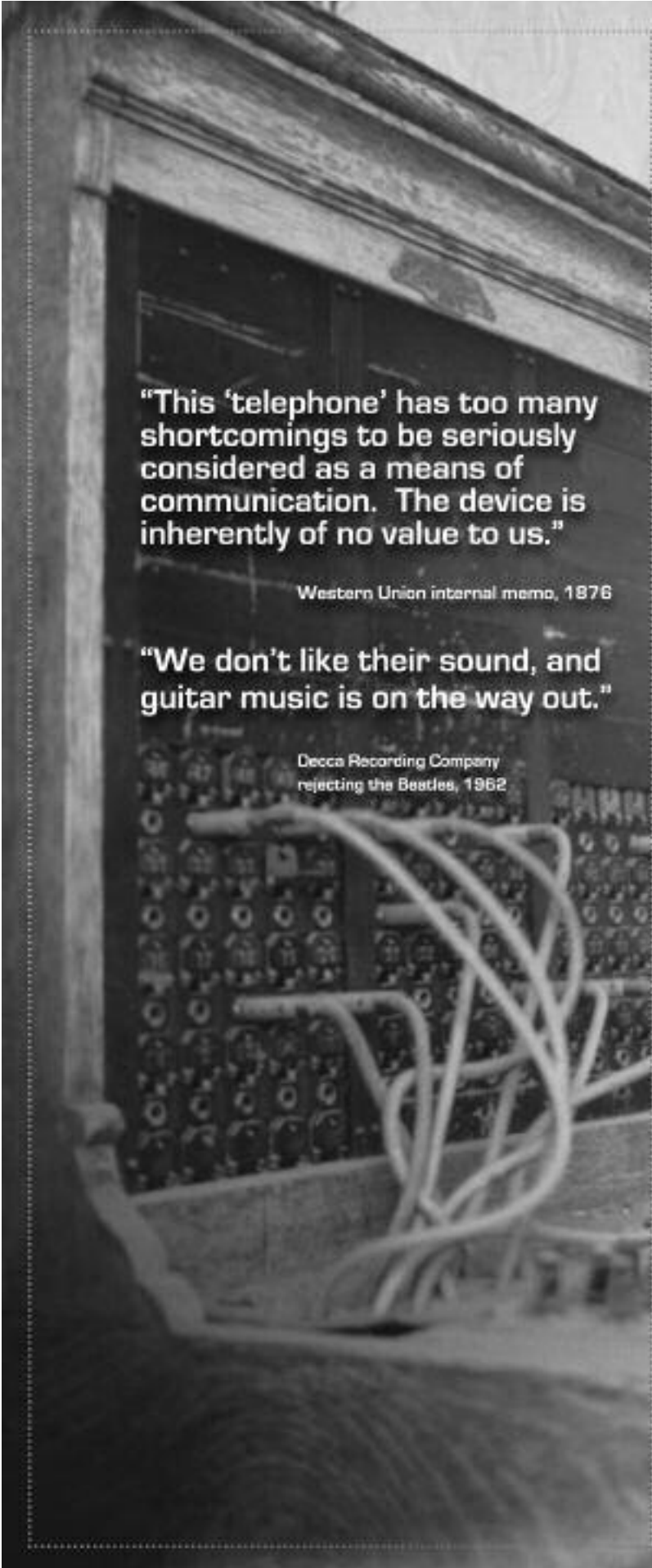
(CRNE). The initiative marks the first time in history that all the region’s governors, state higher education executives and education commissioners have come together with the business community to increase college preparedness and success.

College Ready New England aims to “widen the pipeline” by increasing the number of students who graduate from high school prepared for college study and then go on to earn college degrees.

To achieve these goals, College Ready New England will develop a regional network of policymakers and educators, from pre-kindergarten through college, to share the best ideas and the most successful methods for reaching our common goals. Through active collaboration across the six states, we can make our schools more responsive to student needs and more aligned with the demands of higher learning—and we can point out who isn’t doing it.

College Ready New England will work with the states to develop marketing campaigns targeted at those students who face the most difficulty in entering and succeeding in college. The campaigns will impress upon these students and their parents the value of a college degree in today’s job market and provide them with the information and resources they need to successfully navigate the available options. Too many New Englanders think that college is a perk, an extra; it isn’t. More and more, it’s what allows you to sustain a vibrant life in the future.

Evan S. Dobelle is president and CEO of the New England Board of Higher Education and publisher of CONNECTION. Email: edobelle@nebhe.org.



"This 'telephone' has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us."

Western Union internal memo, 1876

"We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out."

Decca Recording Company
rejecting the Beatles, 1962

**The future is
often hard
to see...**

**But we get a glimpse
of it every day.**

It takes a rare combination of luck and insight to predict what the future will bring. That may be why even experts often get it wrong — dismissing innovations that may signal big changes in their industries.

At HEFA we are privileged to glimpse the future from a unique vantage point. Every day we work with forward-thinking, higher education clients who have the vision to see what is possible. This past year with tax-exempt HEFA financing, a leading university built a high-tech facility to enable cutting-edge learning, a world-renowned research institution invested in advanced microscopes to drive tomorrow's medical breakthroughs, and a local college built a new residence hall to house the students of the 21st century.

With our help, our nonprofit clients secure the financial resources to implement their dreams. For information on how HEFA can help your organization, visit www.mhefa.org.

Together we build the future.

MASSACHUSETTS
hefa
Health & Educational
FACILITIES AUTHORITY



Nourishing Regional Relationships

MARY R. CATHCART

As NEBHE's chair, I look forward to expanding our networks to address challenges facing our region, in particular, the need to increase college readiness and bolster civic engagement.

College Readiness. Many of us have "college readiness" programs in our states, and we are starting to build relationships in our communities, with students, their families and educators, to develop a shared definition of what it means to be "ready" for college.

NEBHE is playing a lead role in a new regionwide initiative called College Ready New England (CRNE), which connects people from all six New England states in an effort to encourage students to prepare for college. All six New England governors, as well as the six states' K-12 education commissioners and state higher education executive officers have signed on to the initiative.

CRNE is based around four goals:

- 1) Increasing the number of high school graduates and GED recipients;
- 2) Increasing the number of high school graduates who are academically prepared for college or career success;
- 3) Increasing the number of learners (traditional and nontraditional) enrolling in two- and four-year colleges; and
- 4) Increasing the number of graduates of two- and four-year colleges.

We are off to a great start, but we will need to expand the dialogue about how we educate our children so they have what it takes to be accepted into college and persist through to graduation. Success will depend on the relationships we are able to build within our communities, around our states and across New England. The higher education institutions that train

our teachers must be particularly engaged in this project.

A compelling video introducing College Ready New England was previewed at the board's annual New England Higher Education Excellence Awards Dinner in February and may be viewed at www.nebhe.org.

Civic Engagement. Too often, citizens and even state policymakers tell me they don't think our universities are "relevant" in their communities. Colleges and universities are viewed as "ivory towers."

While talented faculty are available to help legislators and other leaders with the complex issues they face, relationships between professors and decision-makers outside campus walls are often underdeveloped. A former Maine governor recently told me, "I knew there were a lot of smart people with policy expertise up there in Orono but I never saw them at the State House."

We all have a part in changing the public perception of our higher education institutions by engaging our faculty and students more in service learning and community and state partnerships. For example, the University of Maine's Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center recently was awarded a Community Outreach and Partnership Center grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to connect with the City of Bangor on the type of questions that plague many urban areas: How can a city deal with "disengaged" young people and help connect them to education and jobs? How can we provide adequate affordable housing for our elders and lower-income people? How can we establish vital relationships between our faculty and students

and community organizations to build a dynamic downtown?

Consider also the Maine Community Foundation's Public Policy Scholars—college students who undertake research projects to address important state policy issues. At their recent gathering in Orono, these students presented their findings to a group of university faculty and policymakers. A student from the University of Maine at Farmington worked with two public high schools to address the discrepancy in college attendance between students whose parents are college graduates and those whose parents did not go to college.

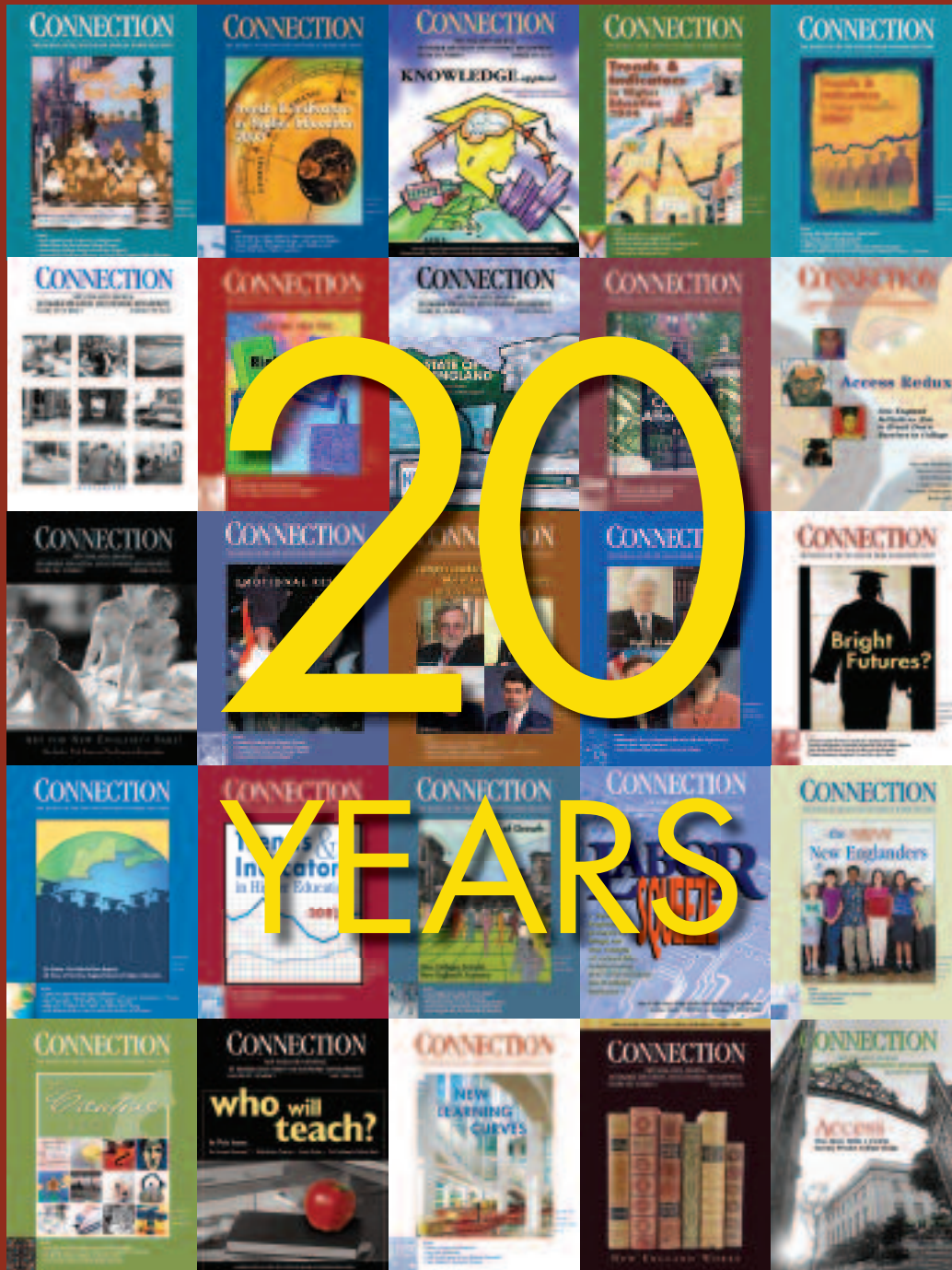
These types of collaborations are plentiful across New England's range of colleges and universities. We must nourish them, within our states and across state boundaries.

NEBHE is in the midst of a strategic planning process to explore the region's future challenges and identify ways our regional organization can be most effective at encouraging college readiness and civic engagement. At the core of our planning process is the vision of NEBHE as a relationship-builder, a connector of ideas, people and resources. We envision becoming a central place for New England's six states to come together and share promising practices. I look forward to nourishing new relationships in my role as NEBHE chair.

Mary R. Cathcart is chair of the New England Board of Higher Education. She is a senior policy associate at the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center and former four-term Maine state senator. Email: maryorono@verizon.net.

CONNECTION

THE JOURNAL OF THE NEW ENGLAND BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION



Covering New England higher education and economic development since 1986!

Join the New England Board of Higher Education in celebrating the 20th anniversary of CONNECTION.

To find out how you can be part of Connection's future, call 617-357-9620, ext. 103, or email: Jlabombard@nebhe.org

Preparing Urban Scholars for College

A Best Practice in College Readiness

BLENDA J. WILSON

Urban Scholars was founded at the University of Massachusetts Boston two decades ago as a pilot program with just 15 students. With support from the university, Boston Public Schools and various funders, this multicultural academic enrichment program has thrived.

Today, Urban Scholars serves more than 100 low-income, first-generation Boston students with high academic potential. Half of them speak a first language other than English. Their average household income: \$24,000.

Remarkably, 98 percent of Urban Scholars graduates have been accepted to a postsecondary institution. Eighty-six percent have either earned or are working toward bachelor's degrees; 11 percent have pursued graduate degrees.

Enriching experiences

The Urban Scholars program serves students throughout the academic year and seven weeks during the summer, offering advanced after-school classes, seminars, tutoring and supervised study. Urban Scholars staff and teachers work with students and partner high schools to develop talent and motivation of participating students. The students meet at UMass Boston's campus on Boston Harbor twice each week during the school year, and five days each week during the summer. Participating middle school students receive an annual stipend up to \$925; high school students get up to \$2,300 each year.

Enrichment classes are offered in subjects ranging from math to public speaking to SAT preparation based on students' skills, grade level and interests. During last summer's math class, for example, students collected data on the first flight of the Wright Brothers and used a wind tunnel to test objects' force and drag.

In reading and writing classes, students improve their critical thinking, writing and public speaking skills by studying and discussing social, political, economic and cultural issues relevant to them. As a final project, students develop graphic design skills by creating a newsletter of their work using Microsoft Publisher.

In addition, every Urban Scholar is expected to take at least one university-level course during the program. Last summer, six students took university courses: Ancient & Medieval Art, Chemistry Principles; Introduction to English; Philosophy 108: Moral & Social Problems and Women, Culture and Identity. After completing the summer program, three students participated in a weeklong Moakley Public Speaking Institute at the John F. Kennedy Library.

Heading off trouble

Student retention and persistence are major challenges for the Urban Scholars program. Last year, 48 percent of the previous year's Urban Scholars returned to the program—two percentage points shy of the program's goal of retaining 50 percent. UMass Boston Associate Vice Provost and program founder Joan Becker, explains that being an Urban Scholar is a huge commitment. "Some students move around; others grapple with balancing time commitments—struggling to manage their personal time, school life and program obligations. And, as Boston public schools increase academic expectations, these students have more homework," she says.

The program requires students to maintain a 3.0 or better grade point average in school and has recently initiated a comprehensive approach to student advising, including detecting and addressing academic difficulties before official warning notices are issued by the school.

The Urban Scholars' approach brings teachers, school officials, parents or guardians and program staff together in support of the student's success. The application process, for example, seeks permission from parents or guardians so that program staff can communicate with school officials and access students' grades. Each term, Urban Scholars staff meet with guidance counselors and teachers to assess student progress and discuss more subtle signs of potential trouble, such as a change in attitude, disengagement, change in body language or inability to grasp certain concepts.

"Teachers are very aware of their students' ongoing progress and any changes in behavior or performance. However, they may not have the resources to follow-up on those observations. Because of our ongoing systematic communication with teachers and officials, we are privy to those early warning signs and are able to institute a comprehensive holistic approach for student improvement," says Urban Scholars Director Robert-Thomas Duclersaint, an expert in adolescent development who speaks Haitian Creole and French.

Once a warning is sent by the schools, Urban Scholars staff work with a student's teachers to create an Academic Improvement Plan. Subject-specific, one-on-one tutoring is scheduled, and weekly progress reports assess homework quality, class work and test grades. Staff and teachers also confer with the school's administration to gather any relevant information about the student's behavior. Then Urban Scholars staff contact the parent or guardian to alert them to their child's academic difficulty and make recommendations on what they might do to support the Academic Improvement Plan.

The Urban Scholars program's goal is to mold students to assume positions of leadership and achievement in society.

This comprehensive approach has worked. One Urban Scholar, who had done well in classes, gradually became disengaged and adopted a negative attitude toward schoolwork. Staff spoke with school officials who believed the loss of the student's mother and her upcoming graduation were the cause. When Urban Scholars staff discussed the situation with her father, they learned that the young woman had stopped seeing a therapist who was helping her cope with her grief. Ultimately, the student explained that schoolwork had become much more difficult with graduation approaching and that her grief had increased with the realization that her mother would not see her get her diploma. "We discussed how difficult a time this must be for her, praised her on the wonderful job she had done, and encouraged her to meet with her therapist to help her through this difficult time," says Duclersaint. "She did just that and it helped her tremendously."

Another Urban Scholar did well one term, but began to slide the next. His teachers thought the problem was not his ability, but a lack of consistency in applying himself. The young man's mother said she constantly threatened him with losses of privileges if he did not do well in school. His teachers, his mother and Urban Scholars staff agreed on a plan of action that included five hours a week of required one-on-one tutoring. The student's status in the Urban Scholars program was designated as conditional; if he did well, he would remain an Urban Scholar in good standing. If he did poorly, he would not be allowed to participate in activities, field trip or classes. "This has proven to be the ongoing motivating factor for him," says Duclersaint. "and he now consistently does well."

Being college-ready

College advising is a major component of the Urban Scholars program. Students spend the summer prior to their senior year in a weekly college-advising seminar. In the fall, the focus shifts to selecting and applying to college. Every junior and senior meets one-on-one with the Urban Scholar college advisor, Chris Kelly, who helps them choose colleges, complete college applications, seek financial aid and, importantly, link with campus student support services to ensure a smooth transition to freshman year.

The program also operates field trips to the Boston National College Fair held each spring at Boston's Bayside Expo and Conference Center. Students are encouraged to intern in a professional field of interest. Last summer, 15 students participated in internships at a variety of workplaces, including the Boston Bar Association, Boston Police Department, the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Franklin Park Zoo, Judicial Youth Corps, State Street Bank, Summer Search and Verizon.

Engaged grantmaking

In 2000, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation made a five-year commitment to the Urban Scholars program through its Minority High Achievement initiative, which aims to increase the number of New England students from underrepresented minority groups who achieve at the highest level. By making a multi-year grant commitment to the program, based on satisfactory annual progress, the foundation has encouraged the program to focus attention on program design, attracting and retaining talented staff and designing data collection and evaluation systems to assess outcomes, without the burden of annual fundraising. Foundation grants for the program, from 2000 to 2005, have totaled \$1.1 million.

The foundation adopted this multi-year approach to grantmaking because we believe a long-term investment in our grantee partners is the best strategy for high-impact in education. Says Joan Becker: "The multiyear funding has provided us with stability, especially in light of the cuts in education funding in recent years. Without it, we would have died; it helped me make the argument to the university to keep us."

The Urban Scholars program's goal is to mold students to assume positions of leadership and achievement in society. Urban Scholars have earned graduate degrees in urban planning from MIT, psychology from Boston College, nursing from Syracuse University and University of Vermont, education from Harvard University and law from Georgetown University Law Center. One graduate received a master of fine arts degree in creative writing from Brown University before authoring three well-received novels and becoming a visiting professor at MIT. Others are teachers, law enforcement professionals, doctors and lawyers.

Thanks to the Urban Scholars program, low-income students from Boston, many of them students of color, are achieving their dreams.

***Blenda J. Wilson** is president and CEO of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. Email: bwilson@nmefdn.org.*

Inclusive Excellence

UConn Builds Capacity for Diversity and Change

DAMON A. WILLIAMS

For the past several years, the University of Connecticut has been carrying out an ambitious plan in pursuit of what the Association of American Colleges and Universities calls “inclusive excellence.” The idea is that true excellence should be measured by how well campus systems, structures and processes meet the needs of *all* students, regardless of socioeconomic, racial, gender or other characteristics. At UConn, standard indicators of excellence such as SAT scores are at an all-time high across the entering class, and so is enrollment of historically underrepresented African-American and Latino students. UConn is also retaining and graduating minority students at rates that are among the nation’s highest. The university has recorded a slight increase in the ethnic and racial diversity of the faculty.

There is no magic formula for achieving inclusive excellence. But the UConn experience offers a few lessons:

Diversity has to be a campuswide priority. At UConn, diversity is an integral part of academic and strategic planning efforts, and the subject is regularly discussed at meetings among senior leadership. For example, at a recent meeting of trustees, administration, faculty and students on future priorities for the university, a major aspect of the discussion focused on infusing diversity into research and scholarship. Unless diversity is included in discussions at the highest levels of governance, policy, and leadership, change will not occur.

A recent study by University of Maine higher education scholar Susan V. Iverson examining the diversity plans of more than 20 institutions found that many plans focus on the marginalized victim status of minorities rather than identifying the problem and developing solutions. Indeed, ill-conceived diversity plans may do more harm than good, creating a negative social discourse that hinders, rather than advances the diversity planning agenda.

UConn is working from a strategic diversity plan that was formally authorized by its board of trustees and focuses very clearly on identifying the problem and proposing several steps for success. Because the plan is authorized at the highest levels of the institution, it applies to the entire university and is designed to withstand changes in leadership, even at the presidential or provost levels. Working from the 2002 trustees’ plan also gives individuals—whether they are supportive or critical of the effort—a stable benchmark for judging the success or failure of the institution as it moves forward.

Still, to ensure change, institutions need diversity plans at both the campuswide level and the unit or

school/college level. Colleges and universities are decentralized environments, so diversity plans must burrow deep into the culture of the institution’s different parts. High-profile campuswide plans may be quickly forgotten, shelved or abandoned unless academic deans, vice presidents, department chairs and others “own” the implementation process locally.

The UConn provost’s office recently began requiring each school, college and division to develop its own plan addressing recruitment and retention, curricular diversity, campus climate and communication of diversity from its own unique perspective. Deans and vice presidents are evaluated, in part, on how well they implement these plans.

An empowered, formal diversity infrastructure is essential. The position of “chief diversity officer” is critical to inclusive excellence. By developing such a position, the university expresses a powerful commitment to diversity, which is often featured prominently on institutional web sites but rarely activated in the institution’s offices, systems and strategic planning processes.

Chief diversity officers are the chief architects of campus diversity. They advise senior leadership on issues like how to protect the institution’s diversity interests in a post-University of Michigan Supreme Court environment. When empowered, they play a key role in the administrative decision-making and participate in a plethora of projects like leading an academic senate committee to develop a new general education diversity distribution requirement; launching a new strategic faculty hiring initiative to recruit more minorities and women; or building international relationships and academic programs at sister institutions in other countries. Although chief diversity officers are not the only people responsible for campus diversity, they play a key role in catalyzing the diversity change process and act as the face and conscience of diversity issues for the institution.

At UConn, the chief diversity officer role is played by the Office of the Vice Provost for Multicultural & International Affairs (OMIA), which directs 19 units, including campus cultural centers, ethnic studies institutes, international affairs programs and affirmative action and equity efforts. The division extends the capabilities of the institution in many important ways. Faculty and staff teach cutting-edge courses and lead research that expands the canon of knowledge regarding issues of race, gender, identity, globalization and sexuality. They host conferences and symposia that enrich the

intellectual life of the institution and explore important current events like the Hurricane Katrina disaster, changing demographics and “the browning of America.”

OMIA staff place special emphases on building relationships that support innovative mentoring initiatives for minority students, retention programs and research projects. One illustration of work in this area involves a five-year National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded project involving an OMIA collaboration with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and several institutions throughout New England. The program aims to implement a leadership and academic success program that focuses on minority student success in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics—the so-called STEM fields. More than a standard retention program, this initiative leverages the best research on student identity, the academic peer group, campus climate and quantitative preparation, to enhance the academic success and leadership development of African-American, Latino, Native American and first-generation college students studying in these areas.

OMIA developed the conceptual model for the program, which requires students to: 1) participate in a first-year experience course focused on minorities in STEM fields; 2) engage in a rigorous quantitative tutorial program; 3) attend local and national leadership conferences; and 4) discuss important but rarely mentioned topics. These topics include developing successful techniques for joining and starting study groups, particularly valuable for students who may be the only people of color in the class and may not be asked to join another group. Or understanding how a Latina female student might approach a white male engineering professor about academic difficulties that she is experiencing, when she has never had a closed-door conversation with a white male, and believes that “she is made to feel stupid because she asks lots of questions in class.”

There is an understanding that UConn is different socially from the inner-cities of Hartford, Willimantic, New Haven and Bridgeport that produce many of the university’s minority students. So the program focuses on helping students overcome these differences and achieve success. Now in its fourth year, the program has enjoyed phenomenal success, with a 100 percent retention rate and achievement levels that are better than campus norms for similar groups of minority students. This project has been funded for an additional four-year period, and the university has captured a second NSF grant to apply the model and lessons learned. This additional support represents a \$1.5 million-plus increase in available resources to increase ethnic and racial diversity in the STEM areas and greater institutionalization of a proven method of helping these students.

Bubble-up energy and entrepreneurial strategies are essential to change. With all these important

accomplishments, UConn has yet to fully implement a formal program to encourage campuswide engagement.

One model program that UConn could emulate can be found at the University of Michigan, where the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives provides grants to undergraduate students for academic diversity projects and student leadership development. For example, a grant could fund an undergraduate student interested in conducting a faculty-supervised research project that examines the relationship between student involvement in minority student organizations like the National Society of Black Engineering and academic achievement or research success. Or funding could go to a student organization to purchase the National Association of Student Personnel Association’s new “Game of Oppression!” board game and to host game and discussion nights with members of the executive boards of student government and the campus newspaper to explore how issues of identity and privilege intersect with the experience of all students.

Similarly, Michigan State University recently developed an “inclusive excellence grant program” that encourages faculty and staff to develop curricular diversity innovations and programs designed to leverage the educational benefits of diversity for all students. The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education has recently implemented a broad diversity challenge grant process designed to encourage new diversity efforts throughout the system.

Entrepreneurial strategies like these create opportunities for campus community members to lead campus diversity efforts—even if they are not “diversity professionals” working in ethnic studies, the women’s center or the chief diversity officer suite. This transforms students, faculty and staff from passive observers of the campus change process into creative initiators of diversity programs and activities. These programs may also serve as important conduits for empowering white men to find their voice in a process that does not often recognize their contributions to the diversity equation.

Shift administrative systems to accommodate the needs of historically underrepresented populations.

UConn’s vice provost for enrollment management and office of undergraduate admissions have implemented a series of new strategies that go beyond the standard fare of embedding diverse faces into websites and marketing collateral. For example, the university has begun hosting minority “yield” receptions specifically designed to spur interaction among prospective students of color and address questions and issues that ethnically and racially diverse students and their parents have about financing higher education, selecting a major and living in a nearly all-white, rural and isolated community like Storrs, Connecticut.

UConn’s admissions office also works with campus cultural centers to hire diverse University of Connecticut students and have them call prospective minority students who have been admitted but have not yet decided

whether to enroll. This strategy personalizes the decision-making process by establishing a one-to-one relationship with prospective students. Division I athletic programs often use this strategy, enlisting current student athletes in the recruitment of blue-chip prospects, but such strategies are rarely used for prospective students who are not athletes.

Similar culturally aligned strategies are applied during “electronic admission days.” On these days, UConn admissions staff visit urban, largely minority high schools to guide prospective students through the on-line application process. Like most institutions, UConn is moving towards a paperless admissions process to streamline systems, create financial efficiencies and deliver a higher quality of service to prospective students. Undergraduate admissions staff developed this program as a way of achieving administrative excellence without sacrificing potential students who may not have access to a personal computer in the home. Without this type of targeted intervention implemented directly in minority communities, UConn might have seen a dramatic reduction in the number of applicants coming from large urban feeder schools in Hartford and elsewhere throughout the state.

These strategies are important for a number of reasons. They allow UConn to validate the unique identities, experiences and needs that many students

of color bring to campus. And they establish the “integration and belonging” process for entering students, before they even enroll and begin classes—a process that is widely touted as essential to retention. Finally, many students of color leave predominantly white institutions with enormous bitterness because they do not have a sense of connection and ownership with their alma mater. By entrusting current students with the recruitment role of selling UConn’s “brand equity” to “prospective buyers,” the university empowers them as agents of change who are not only important to the current reality of the institution but can leave a positive legacy for future students.

The journey to inclusive excellence is not easy, and though UConn has accomplished a great deal, more needs to be done. We should view the process as one of disturbance and alignment, always questioning the past and encouraging students, faculty and staff to stretch and find new ways to support, nurture and leverage diversity in the service of student learning and achievement.

Damon A. Williams is assistant vice provost for multicultural & international affairs and co-director of the chief diversity officer study at the University of Connecticut. Email: damon.williams@uconn.edu.

Gilbane Co.
1/2 pg 19

Smooth Transfer

A Once Mundane Administrative Issue Re-emerges as a Key Tool for Equity

FRANCESCA B. PURCELL

Undergraduate transfer is a messy and too-often frustrating part of college for faculty, staff and, above all, the students themselves. Students are discouraged by unclear and complicated curriculum requirements. Faculty are reluctant to accept courses from another institution and question the preparedness of transfer students. And advisors are diverted from assisting students by the administrative minutia of course equivalencies and articulation agreements. As a result, transfer is often perceived merely as a bothersome technical procedure and so it is devalued.

Yet transfer is a growing and increasingly complex trend across the country that has serious equity implications. A report released this past February by the U.S. Department of Education found that nearly 60 percent of students from the high school class of 1992 attended more than one college and, of this group, 35 percent crossed state lines in the process. Moreover, although the most common type of transfer continues to be the vertical move from community or junior colleges to bachelor's degree-granting institutions, increasing numbers of students are transferring laterally to institutions at the same level or reversing direction and transferring from a university back to a community college. Some students find themselves caught in a "swirl," transferring credits from one institution to the next without much direction.

This article focuses on vertical transfer from community colleges to senior institutions because community college students still constitute the majority of transfer students and because community colleges play a crucial access role for students underrepresented in higher education. Community colleges are lauded for their financial affordability, geographical accessibility, and open admissions policies which attract students who may not have otherwise considered higher education. National studies indicate that low-income students, first-generation college students, African-Americans and Latinos enroll in two-year colleges at higher rates than their higher-income and white counterparts.

Indeed, underrepresented students stand to gain the most from improved transfer. As Jane Wellman at the Institute for Higher Education Policy observes: "Improving the effectiveness of two-four transfer will be the key to national progress in closing the gap among racial groups in degree attainment—and it will affect far more students than affirmative action policy." Although many students from underrepresented groups arrive at college despite the odds and look forward to eventually earning a bachelor's degree as a critical first

step toward greater social mobility, the reality is that their chances of doing so are slim.

Half of all undergraduates who start at a community college with the intention of obtaining a bachelor's degree and about one-fourth of those who start with the intention of earning only an associate degree go on to transfer to a four-year institution within six years, according to the U.S. Department of Education. These statistics do not take into account the formidable social, financial and educational barriers many community college students bring through the doors or the reality that many students do not go to community college for the purpose of transferring. Nevertheless, the higher education community would have a hard time arguing that community college students are setting and achieving their educational aspirations at optimal levels. Even for those who successfully transfer, not all graduate with a bachelor's degree.

One problem relates to difficulty in transferring credits from a two-year to a four-year institution. To be sure, some credits may not transfer toward a bachelor's degree for legitimate reasons; a course may not apply to the program of study at the four-year institution or may have been completed so far in the past that the content is no longer relevant, or the student might have earned a failing grade. But in many cases, four-year institutions require transfer students to take additional courses to meet specific institutional requirements or do not count a student's credits toward their major. Whatever the reasons, the unfortunate result is that transfer students who earn a bachelor's degree take approximately 7 percent more credits than students who attended only one school, according to Education Department analyst Cliff Adelman. Extra course-taking costs time and money for the transfer student, as well as the institution and relevant funding agencies. (In addition, research published by Vanderbilt University higher education professor William R. Doyle in the May/June 2006 issue of *Change* magazine suggests that transfer students who have all their credits accepted are about twice as likely to earn a bachelor's degree in six years as those who only have some credits accepted.)

Community college students can transfer successfully, earn bachelor's degrees and succeed. But it's easy to get pushed off the pathway. A 2004 report by the American Association of Community Colleges and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities found that transfer students face barriers in perceptions, practices and policies. For example, some four-year institutions question the quality of courses offered

at two-year institutions or the academic preparedness of incoming transfer students. Community college transfer students often find that their new schools are not as adept in supporting students who work full-time and raise children. And at the system and state levels, policies and incentives are often inadequate and inconsistent.

A regional online transfer system could alleviate the confusion and stress that students and their advisors routinely face when trying to determine how course credits would be applied at a transfer institution.

The New England states have reason to be attuned to the benefits and obstacles associated with transfer, because both the number and the proportion of students enrolled in the region's 62 community and "junior" colleges are on the rise. The number of New England community college students rose from 161,660 in 1998 to 190,018 in 2004, representing an 18 percent increase, while the proportion of all undergraduates enrolled in the region's two-year institutions rose from 24 percent to 28 percent. With tuition and costs of living rising, this trend is likely to continue.

The six states share some approaches to transfer. For example, all implement articulation agreements wherein community college students who successfully graduate from a particular program with their associate degree will either be automatically admitted to a four-year "receiving" institution or assured that all their credits will transfer. For example, Bristol Community College in Fall River, Mass., has articulation agreements with more than 20 colleges and universities in New England, including private institutions such as Bryant University in Rhode Island and Unity College in Maine. A student graduating from Bristol with an associate degree in environmental science, for example, will be admitted with junior standing to Unity College's bachelor's program in environmental science.

Most of the states have also instituted statewide policies mandating that such transfer agreements are uniform and widespread. The 35-year-old nonprofit New England Transfer Association provides professional training and development opportunities for individuals who directly assist students in the transfer process. In the business of transfer, it is essential to stay updated on curricula and programs that are continually in flux.

Several New England states have responded to transfer issues with more cutting-edge strategies. In Vermont, all grades earned from any public higher education institution appear on a single transcript and count toward the student's final grade point average. This arrangement relieves students of the nuisance of forwarding transcripts (a frequent transfer impediment) and more broadly, connotes a confidence in the comparability of course

quality across the system's institutions.

Maine, recognizing that the majority of community college students transfer prior to earning a degree, uses an online course equivalency system whereby a student can enter the courses he or she completed at the community college and then easily determine how these courses would be applied to degrees at Maine's public four-year institutions.

Massachusetts is one of the few states in the country to attach a financial incentive to transfer. The state's community college students who graduate from certain programs with a 3.0 grade point average or higher are entitled to a 33 percent reduction in their tuition at a public state college or the University of Massachusetts.

While all these initiatives are valuable in smoothing the transfer process, there remains room for improvement within states and across the region. A regional online transfer course equivalency system could alleviate the confusion and stress that students and their advisors routinely face when trying to determine how course credits would be applied at a transfer institution. Such a system would be especially helpful for those students who cross state lines. Ongoing regional collaboration among faculty and institutional leaders would greatly assuage the misperceptions and miscommunications that often accompany the transfer process. Reliable follow-up data from the four-year colleges could help dispel the myth that students who transferred in from community colleges do not perform as well.

Though students who transfer from community colleges earn bachelor's degrees at rates similar to classmates who begin college at four-year institutions, many community college students don't stay long enough to transfer. Many states are now exploring ways to encourage community college students to earn 20 credits during their first year in order to gain enough momentum to complete their bachelor's degrees at rates comparable to their four-year counterparts. As most students transfer prior to attaining an associate degree, systematic efforts should be made to keep them moving toward a four-year degree.

These are just a few of the practices and policies that could improve transfer rates for community college students to bachelor's-degree granting institutions. Transfer will continue to grow and become increasingly complicated. Although often viewed as a tangential issue, transfer cuts to the center of any institution's work, raising concerns about the quality and comparability of its courses and its ability to educate a diversity of students. Transfer is a crucial pathway toward a bachelor's degree especially for underrepresented students. Yet, because of cumbersome transfer strategies, many of the students who can least afford to go without a bachelor's degree are pushed to the sidelines of higher education.

Francesca B. Purcell is associate director for academic policy with the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. Email: FPurcell@bhe.mass.edu.

Summer Programs

For High School Students Who Learn Differently



3-WEEK HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM July 9 – July 28

For Rising High School Juniors and Seniors

2-WEEK TRANSITION PROGRAMS July 23 – August 5

For College-Bound 2006 Graduates

July 30 – August 12

For 2006 Graduates Undecided About Their Future Plans



LANDMARK
COLLEGE

Putney, Vermont

Targeted summer programs to help high school students and recent graduates succeed academically at America's premier college for students with learning disabilities and AD/HD. For information, visit www.landmark.edu or call **802-387-6718**.

Middlesex Community College

Bedford • MASSACHUSETTS • Lowell

**It's Our Business to Help Your Business
We're in the Education Business**

Business and Industry Programs



Cost-Effective



Tailor-Made



Diverse Delivery Methods



A Perfect Partner

One of the Top Ten Largest
Computer Software Trainers
in the State!

Boston Business
Journal Book of Lists

- Customized Programs for Business & Industry ■
- Hundreds of Credit & Noncredit Courses ■
- Professional Development Programs ■
- Online Courses and Programs ■

AND

*The Middlesex Technology Institute-
Creatively Designed Programs to Meet Individual
and Corporate Technology Training Needs*



To learn more, call Middlesex's Corporate Education and Training Office at 1-888-622-2400, or visit our website @ www.middlesex.mass.edu/bus_ind/

Ask for Our New Business and Industry Programs Booklet.

Community College Graduation Rates

New England's Community Colleges Serve as Gateways to Opportunity. ... But Could They Be More Successful?

New England's 43 community and technical colleges enroll nearly 200,000 students. More than their four-year counterparts, these institutions educate New England's "underserved" students including low-income and first-generation students and students of color. They are the "open door" institutions for our high school dropouts, GED-earners, underprepared high school graduates, low-wage workers and adult learners seeking "retraining" or taking a class or two for a job promotion.

Community college graduation rates vary widely depending in large part upon an institution's student clientele, with urban institutions generally posting the lowest rates.

Many community college students "stop-in" and "stop-out" of their college programs. The reasons for this are well-documented. Some face significant work or family demands that derail their education plans. Some are simply not prepared academically for the work. In addition, a student who begins at a community college but transfers to another institution before earning an associate degree is mischaracterized by the data as a non-completer.

Nonetheless, a growing number of economists, policy leaders and others believe that the success of these gateway institutions can no longer be measured by the number of students entering the gate, but rather by how many graduate. Community colleges, regardless of their populations, can be more successful, they say. For evidence, they point to institutions such as New York City's LaGuardia Community College whose First-Year Academies for incoming students and teaching methods that engage and challenge a diverse array of students have been specially recognized by the MetLife Foundation for improving outcomes for low-income, first generation, immigrant and working students.

With support from the MELMAC Education Foundation, Maine's York County Community College next fall will launch a comprehensive effort to reduce attrition among students—especially in the first year when the risk of dropping out is high—and improve transfer and graduation rates. The college will implement special advising for high-risk students, supplemental instruction, learning communities, a peer calling program and other innovative strategies in an effort to increase graduation and transfer rates by 4 percent per year through 2010.

Connecticut's Housatonic Community College, meanwhile, was awarded a \$50,000 planning grant to join 35 other

Percentage of Degree-Seeking Full-Time Freshmen who Complete an Associate Degree within Three Years at Community Colleges, 2003-04

Highest Graduation Rates

Washington County Community College	84%
N.H. Community Technical College, Nashua	83%
Northern Maine Technical College	45%
Kennebec Valley Community College	42%
N.H. Community Technical College, Berlin/Laconia	40%
New Hampshire Technical Institute	37%
Eastern Maine Community College	35%
Asnuntuck Community College	32%
Southern Maine Community College	32%
N.H. Community Technical College, Manchester/Stratham	29%

U.S. Average **17%**

Lowest Graduation Rates

Roxbury Community College	4%
Three Rivers Community College	8%
Naugatuck Valley Community College	8%
Norwalk Community College	9%
Cape Cod Community College	10%
Community College of Rhode Island	10%
Massachusetts Bay Community College	11%
Bunker Hill Community College	11%
Manchester Community College	12%
Tunxis Community College	13%
Northwestern Connecticut Community College	13%
Housatonic Community College	13%

Source: The Institute for College Access and Success, www.economicdiversity.org

community colleges nationwide in the "Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count" initiative designed to improve student success. The initiative, funded by the Lumina Foundation for Education, KnowledgeWorks Foundation and the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, aims to help community colleges understand student experiences and perceptions and seek students' ideas and opinions about how the colleges can better serve their needs.

—Analysis by Jamie E. Scurry, NEBHE director of policy and research.

CC Leader

Community Colleges Go Outside to Fill Key Posts

BARBARA VINIAR

Ask one community college leader if hiring individuals who haven't come through the ranks makes sense, and he will say absolutely not, the cultural adjustment is too difficult. Ask another, and she will say that with the right guidance and orientation, "outsiders" make excellent hires. Ask another, and you'll hear that there is an adequate but underrepresented pool of potential leaders among women and minorities already in community colleges, why go outside?

Half of the nation's nearly 1,000 community college presidents will retire over the next few years, according to some estimates. In addition, the senior administrators who might have been on track to assume these positions are themselves retiring, drying up the pipeline that used to ensure a steady flow of candidates from within, and creating vacancies in critical areas of campus leadership. Filling "the leadership gap" has reached a crisis point for community colleges nationwide.

In the midst of this crisis, some campuses are turning to candidates from business, the military, politics and other non-community college backgrounds. While some community colleges are wary of "outsiders," there are numerous New England examples of leaders who have made the transition successfully.

Military officers receive leadership training and often retire young enough to have a full second career. David Bull retired from the U.S. Air Force as a colonel and is now dean of administration and finance at Quinebaug Community College in Connecticut. He says his responsibilities and challenges are so similar it was like "taking off one uniform and putting on another." As a base civil engineer, Bull was responsible for facilities, capital projects, procurement of maintenance and repair contracts and master planning. He now oversees the college store, facilities, finance, IT, personnel, maintenance and contracting. "The applications are different," says Bull, "but the fundamentals are the same." Bull sees his role as "the leader of a business enterprise that supports the academic community." The MBA he earned while in the military assists him in achieving efficiencies.

"Although the military is a more hierarchical organization, getting the job done in either environment is about team-building and uses the same leadership skills," says Bull. In addition to the rewards of "direct student contact," Bull says he enjoys the "variety and constant challenges" offered by his community college leadership position.

Community college leaders drawn from the corporate sector are most likely to transition within specific fields

like Human Resources, Information Technology and Public Relations. For Richard Hockery, moving from educational software developer to community college IT administration was natural. As CIO of the New Hampshire Community Technical Colleges, Dockery likes "providing access for those without other opportunities." Dennis Moore, assistant to the president and director of public relations and publications at the Community College of Rhode Island, had an extensive PR background at the former Bank of Boston and Roger Williams Medical Center. "PR skills such as writing are easily transferable," says Moore, "enabling an individual to produce quickly in a new environment." Moore says his tenure as chief spokesperson for the bank, addressing layoffs, branch closures and declining profits, and explaining "wrong side" surgeries and disbarred doctors for the hospital, prepared him for "crisis communications" during a difficult year when faculty voted no confidence in CCRI's president, who eventually stepped down. What surprised Moore about community colleges was their complexity and the challenge of dealing with multiple constituencies internally and externally.

Community colleges have difficulty matching corporate salaries to attract skilled employees, but they often offer a more attractive work/life balance, benefits that may include tuition remission for families and an intellectually and culturally stimulating environment. They also offer prospective career-changers an important intangible: the chance to be part of improving students' lives by providing access to higher education and better jobs. David Sykes and Joanne Agnello-Veley, both of Middlesex Community College in Middletown, Conn., were attracted by these advantages.

Sykes's 21 years with the Hartford Insurance Group gave him experience in budget, operations and payroll. He then started his own consulting firm specializing in productivity improvement, HR training and 401(k) educational programs. The broad range of skills made him an excellent candidate for his current position, dean of administration and finance. Although the benefits and regular schedule were attractive after running his own business, "making a visible contribution" was the most important factor in making the switch. Sykes says the biggest adjustment has been to a union environment where it is difficult to reward or penalize individual performance. He has had to become "more of a counselor and coach" in order to motivate his employees. "This is the best job I have held—something new every day," says Sykes.

Agnello-Veley worked for the U.S. Department of Labor, as well as a privately owned utility and a *Fortune 50* company prior to moving to a community college. These diverse experiences gave her the ability “to understand multiple perspectives and to know what works and what doesn’t.” Her biggest challenge as director of human resources at Middlesex has been “to understand and untangle red tape.”

“If an average employee can’t understand a policy, it’s not a good policy,” says Agnello-Veley. She and her husband both left the private sector for state employment to enjoy a better quality of life. “We have rewarding careers in our fields and time with our children,” she says.

Middlesex President Wilfredo Nieves says he “relies on Sykes’s background and sense of balance,” while Agnello-Veley’s “openness to learning and sharing has facilitated dialogue and looking at things differently.”

These individuals represent the more typical “outside” hires. They have entered at a mid-level or senior-level leadership position which can provide them with the community college experience they need to become presidents. It is rarer for someone to move directly into a presidency from other sectors, but there are some whose backgrounds have made the transition possible. Before becoming president of North Shore Community College in Danvers, Mass., Wayne Burton served two terms in the New Hampshire state Legislature, one in a minority leadership position. “My legislative service was far better preparation for being a president than my doctorate in higher education leadership,” he says.



Burton: Legislative background prepared him for community college presidency.

Burton sees important parallels in the skills required in his political and college careers: “First, I had to build consensus among 400 legislators, only 140 of whom were from my party. This was excellent preparation for working with faculty. Second, having an insider’s understanding of the legislative process is an advantage for a public community college leader. Third, running for office is like

being a candidate for the [college] presidency. It’s a grueling process of selling yourself to multiple constituents while keeping your soul intact. And finally,

like a legislator, my job as president is to be visible and helpful.”

Many presidential duties have come naturally for the former politician. Last April, for example, Burton went to Washington, D.C. to lobby for earmarks for the college, provisions in the reauthorization of the federal Higher Education Act and a new technical high school North Shore is trying to build in Danvers. But other responsibilities have required more adjustment. Burton says he was least prepared for managing up, or working with board members. Presidents who have come through the ranks may have a network of fellow presidents to call upon when problems arise with boards. For those appointed from outside, board tensions can add stress to an already lonely endeavor.

Katharine Eneguess, president of the New Hampshire Community Technical College, Berlin/Laconia, agrees that an understanding of how the political environment influences public policy is a significant advantage for a community college president. Eneguess spent 16 years specializing in educational policy and community development with the New Hampshire Business and Industry Association, earning her the nickname in the Granite State of “the voice of education.” She is in her current position, she says, “because of the direct connection between community colleges, educational attainment and the future of workforce and economic development.”



Eneguess: Spent 16 years with business and industry group.

The movement of outsiders into community colleges is not without controversy. Some see it as one more attempt to make colleges into businesses. Others fear that the “crisis” is being used as an excuse to hire “good old boys” from business and government networks. But there is a powerful argument for going outside: Our institutional challenges are getting more complex and our leadership jobs are getting harder. We can’t afford to exclude talented individuals with different backgrounds from the pool of people we tap to fulfill our mission.

Barbara Viniar is executive director of the Institute for Community College Development at Cornell University and former president of Berkshire Community College. Email: barbara.viniar@cornell.edu.

Student Debt: Earnings Premium or Opportunity Cost?

CHUCK O'TOOLE



Are college loans worth the risk? For decades, educators and politicians have promoted a college degree as the one sure ticket to middle-class comfort. But every year, more students rely on loans to cover rising tuitions, and some economists now worry that those debts may sabotage the middle-class dreams they are supposed to help realize.

Recent Bush administration changes making federal loans more expensive add to the fears. As of July 1, the interest rate on all new federally guaranteed Stafford loans—the most popular student loans in the country, used by over 10 million students and representing nearly \$50 billion in college financing in 2004—will change from a variable rate capped at 8.25 percent to a fixed 6.8 percent rate. The new fixed rate is higher than the historical average for Stafford loans, and according to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* will add \$2,000 to the lifetime repayment cost of a \$20,000 Stafford debt.

The proportion of U.S. 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college hit an all-time high of 38 percent in 2003, according to the most current data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Some researchers give student loan programs much of the credit for this enrollment expansion. The 2002 National Student Loan Survey published by Nellie Mae, the Braintree, Mass.-based student loan company now owned by Sallie Mae, found that “a consistent majority of students who borrow to pay for their higher education believe they could not have gone to college without student loans.” Nearly six in 10 survey respondents said loans gave them the opportunity to attend the institution of their choice. And while up to a third of the Nellie Mae respondents

felt that their loans were a major financial burden, most reported that their monthly payments were at or below the threshold of 8 percent of gross earnings that the loan industry estimates is comfortably affordable.

But other evidence suggests the enrollment boom has come at a cost to students and their families. In the 1992-93 academic year, 34 percent of full-time undergraduates took out loans, borrowing an average of \$4,924 (in 2003 dollars) per year, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. By 2003, the share of undergrads borrowing had reached 50 percent, and their loans averaged \$6,200. In other words, half of all students were on course to graduate with as much as \$25,000 of debt—and the numbers were growing, raising particular concerns about students interested in lower-paying service careers.

Although 59 percent of respondents in the Nellie Mae study felt that loans “were worth incurring because of the career opportunities provided,” nearly one in five reported that their loans “had a significant impact on their career plans.” And a more recent State PIRGs report, *Paying Back, Not Giving Back*, notes that average salaries in teaching and social work are now too low to repay the average loans incurred to enter those fields.

Meanwhile, indebted college graduates are far more likely than their counterparts without debt to live paycheck to paycheck, according to an Internet of 21- to 35-year-olds by AllianceBernstein Investments, whose products include college savings plans. Many survey respondents reported delaying home-buying and putting off medical or dental procedures among a long list of negative impacts of college loan debt.

The concern that student indebtedness would restrict career and lifestyle choices is as old as college loans themselves, though the would-be Cassandras have not always been vindicated.

Fifty years ago, when the Massachusetts Higher Education Assistance Corp. (now American Student Assistance) was founded, one Massachusetts newspaper fretted that no woman in her right mind would marry a graduate who was deeply in debt before he even had a diploma. And 20 years ago, then-Bowdoin College president A. LeRoy Greason observed in this journal that “students who graduate with large debts will feel that they cannot afford to go into such fields as teaching, religion and social service—for the remuneration will not enable them to carry large debts.” [CONNECTION, Summer 1986]

Despite the decades of dire predictions, a crisis is hard to discern. Though marriage rates have dropped since the 1950s, few would attribute the trend to student loans. And *contra* Greason, since 1986, graduates *have* managed to pay back their education debts and pursue nonprofit careers.

Today, though, there are signs of widespread financial strain among the middle class. In May, the Center for American Progress reported that middle-class wages have barely moved since the 1970s, while debts for essentials like housing, health care and education have exploded. And while earning a bachelor’s degree adds nearly \$1 million to a worker’s lifetime income, workers with no more than high school diplomas have seen their wages drop over the period. Where a college degree once offered a

leg up in the job market, it now seems more like a life preserver. It's hardly surprising then that the debate about who should pay for college has become more vocal and emotional.

College Board economist Sandy Baum, co-author of the 2002 Nellie Mae study, believes student loans are catching the blame for ballooning housing and health care costs. "There's a drumbeat to blame student debt," she says, "but the statistics just don't hold up."

What matters in assessing the student loan burden, Baum contends, is not the overall amount borrowed, but rather the monthly payment in relation to a borrower's gross monthly income. Thanks to historically low interest rates over the past 15 years, those payment-to-income ratios remained stable, even as principal amounts grew.

As a result, the typical student can pay back loans with little hardship, according to Baum. The panic about students "drowning in debt" is exaggerated, she says. The problem is that not enough families understand borrowing for college is "good" debt. Nonetheless, Baum does see problems in the current system, including federal loan limits that are too low, irrational and inequitable repayment policies and inadequate protections for students with unmanageable payments. She warns further that students from low-income backgrounds and those who enter low-paying fields will have a harder time repaying loans and be at higher risk of default as a result of July 1 interest rate hikes.

Baum adds that part of the responsibility must belong to the student. "As a student you have to make smart choices," she says. "If you take out \$50,000 in loans to go into [a career in] early childhood education, you're going to have a problem."

To help address that problem, Baum has worked recently with economist Saul Schwartz of Canada's Carleton University to develop a system of benchmarks for what constitutes "manageable debt," based on where borrowers' income falls in relation to the national median income. Such a

system could enable lenders to make better judgments about what repayment levels are appropriate for which students, while helping students make more informed decisions about loans and careers. (Indeed, the State PIRGs report used Baum and Schwartz's proposed system to gauge loans' effect on service careers.)

The panic about students "drowning in debt" is exaggerated, says economist Sandy Baum.

Still, Baum's discussion of investment and risk departs from the higher ed industry's simpler rhetoric centered on upward mobility. In fact, colleges, in their quest for students and resources, were the first to promote the idea of an "earnings premium" attached to each level of degree attainment. The notion that not every degree brings more money, and that some education risks may not pay off, is nearly heresy.

Tamara Draut is trying to bring attention to that risk in hopes of changing the college financing system. Draut is the director of the Economic Opportunity Program at the think tank Demos and author of the 2006 book *Strapped: Why America's 20- and 30-Somethings Can't Get Ahead*. Draut's book takes a broad look at the financial pressures facing the younger generations. She believes that the "debt-for-diploma" system fails at what should be its most important task: expanding college access to those least able to afford it.

"Indebted graduates get all of the media attention, but they're only part of the problem," Draut told CONNECTION. She argues that low-income students are leery about taking on debt to finance their education, and studies have shown that loan-based aid does not encourage them to attend college.

Robert Shireman, executive director of The Institute for College Access and Success, echoed Draut's point in recent testimony before Congress. Among "college-ready" high school

graduates from higher income families, he said, 83 percent enroll in a four-year college within two years of leaving high school. But among low-income families, just 52 percent do. "More than one in five qualified low-income students does not go [to college] at all," he added. And a disproportionate number of lower-income students drop out of college before earning a degree.

Those borrowers who drop out of college are left with the worst of both worlds: a heap of debt and no earnings premium. Roughly 20 percent of borrowers at four-year institutions drop out of college before earning a degree, according to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.

Elite colleges like Harvard and Princeton have recently switched to grants-only aid packages for lower- and middle-income students. But while such generosity grabs headlines, most institutions lack the resources to offer similar deals. Draut concludes that the problem goes beyond defaults and dropouts, to the wider ripple effects of debt on the economy. "A whole generation is leaving college already in debt and encountering higher housing and health care costs." To deal with high payments and low starting salaries, she says, young people rely more on credit cards to pay for basic needs, landing them still deeper in debt and forestalling savings for a first home or their children's education.

The elephant in the room is the surging cost of a college degree and the utter failure of colleges, government and the market to restrain that cost. So long as a college degree remains a necessity for middle-class life and the price hikes keep coming, someone will have to pay. And though a college degree may be indispensable in the job market, going deep into debt to earn one will remain a gamble.

Chuck O'Toole was a NEBHE staff writer until May when he left New England to pursue a master's degree at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. O'Toole is financing his degree primarily through student loans.

A Summary of STEM Legislation

JAMES T. BRETT

The United States and New England are not producing enough graduates in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) to meet the demand for workers with these skills. The number of engineering degrees awarded by U.S. colleges and universities shrank by 20 percent from 1985 to 2004, according to the National Science Board. The number of undergraduates declaring computer science majors has dropped 33 percent since 2002, according to a 2004 survey by the Computer Research Association.

In addition, U.S. women and minorities remain significantly underrepresented in STEM fields. African-Americans make up only 10 percent of the IT workforce, and Hispanics under 7 percent, according to the Information Technology Association of America. The percentage of IT workers who are women, meanwhile, slid from 41 percent in 1996 to 32 percent in 2004, according to the association.

In response to this problem, Capitol Hill is awash in STEM-related bills. The New England Council, which represents the six-state region's business community, is tracking at least six major bills designed to improve the quality of education in STEM subjects.

Following are summaries of some of the major bills:

The Science and Mathematics Education for Competitiveness Act (H.R. 5358), sponsored by Rep. Joe Schwarz (R-Mich.), is the product of House Science Committee Republicans. Among its provisions, the bill would establish National Science Foundation (NSF) scholarships for students who pursue degrees in STEM fields and commit to teaching after graduation. The bill also would authorize school and university partnerships for science and math education at NSF that would provide grants to higher education institutions to establish programs to improve elementary and secondary science and math instruction, including preparing teachers to teach Advanced Placement science and math courses.

The Protect America's Competitive Edge (PACE)-Education Act (S. 2198), sponsored by Sen. Pete Domenici

(R-N.M.), adopts the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences report *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, with merit-based scholarships and other programs to prepare additional math and science teachers and grants to train teachers to teach Advanced Placement courses. Provisions in this and related PACE bills would double federal funding for basic scientific research, reform visa processes for foreign science and mathematics students and extend existing research and development tax credits.

The National Innovation Act (S. 2109), introduced last year by Sens. Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.) and John Ensign (R-Nev.), is based on the Council on Competitiveness's National Innovation Initiative Report. The bill would increase federal support for cutting-edge research, particularly multidisciplinary research, and aim to revolutionize U.S. manufacturing technologies and processes through three "Pilot Test Beds of Excellence." The bill would encourage regional economic development and increase federal support for the Technology Talent Act, which provides competitive grants to colleges and universities for innovative program to increase the number of graduates in STEM fields. It would make permanent the existing research and development tax credit and expand eligibility to more firms.

The New National Defense Education Act (NNDEA) began as Title II of the broader Right TRACK Act (S. 2357), sponsored by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) to address

global competitiveness. The NNDEA is expected to be introduced as stand-alone legislation soon. The legislation would modernize STEM education in part by aligning state standards with national benchmarks. It would also invest in attracting high-quality teachers to STEM fields through loan forgiveness, tax incentives and scholarships. The bill would aim to improve college access with state-based grants covering students' unmet financial need.

The Innovation and Competitiveness Act (H.R. 4845), sponsored by Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.), would introduce an "innovation scholarship" program in math and science, a permanent research and development tax credit, an overhaul of the legal system and increased use of health care information technology, as well as business tax simplification.

The Securing Excellence in Education for our Kids (SEEK) in Math and Science Act (S. 2423), introduced by Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Penn.), would provide scholarships, student loan forgiveness and tax incentives for teachers in math and science fields. The bill would expand access to Advanced Placement coursework, provide performance incentives for teachers who improve student achievement, create a public awareness campaign on the importance of STEM education and evaluate the effectiveness of federal programs designed to increase the number of students in STEM areas of study.

James T. Brett is president and CEO of The New England Council.



Athletic IQ

Matching Students to Intercollegiate Athletics

BRYAN E. CARLSON

More than 7 million high school students—half the nation's total—participated in high school athletics in the 2004-2005 school year, according to the National Federation of State High School Associations. But this pipeline narrows precipitously at the college level where a comparatively meager 375,000 student athletes participate in sports for which the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) holds championship competition.

This funnel exposes a new set of concerns related to insufficient access and denied opportunity. Less than 6 percent of interscholastic high school athletes ever see the light of NCAA competition. As a result, thousands upon thousands of aspiring NCAA student athletes end up settling for intramural play—or are compelled to withdraw permanently from competitive athletics.

In other instances, colleges recruit student athletes without any reliable referencing of academic interests or preparedness, which increases the probability of mismatches between student athletes and the institutions where they enroll—mismatches that can lead to splinters from an athletic bench and academic warnings from a professor.

A new initiative known as Athletic IQ has the capacity to significantly increase access to and participation in intercollegiate athletics on all levels. Headquartered in Canton, Mass., Athletic IQ has teamed up with the Indianapolis-based National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association to provide a standardized athletic evaluation system relevant for all student athletes and all intercollegiate athletic programs.

The standardized Athletic IQ test, which evaluates physical performance, as opposed to cerebral capacities, will also generate a comprehensive academic profile for each and every test-taker. Athletic IQ holds the promise of becoming the analog of the SAT and the ACT for college-bound student athletes from coast to coast.

The combination of standardized academic *and* athletic performance data reported by Athletic IQ will make it possible to achieve a better match between students and institutions in every area of competition for Divisions I, II and III. Colleges and universities will be able to identify and recruit the right student athletes.



Maine Model

The University of Maine in 2003 received federal funding to bring together athletic directors, coaches and former athletes in an effort to “describe what healthy sports programs look like,” highlight “out-of-bounds” behaviors and policies and issue recommendations for communities to adopt.



The resulting 2005 report, *Sports Done Right: A Call to Action on Behalf of Maine Student-Athletes*, provides guidelines for communities to encourage competition in a way

that contributes to student learning, discourage conflict among athletes, coaches and spectators, de-emphasize winning at all costs and counter the trend toward excessive specialization among student athletes. As the *Portland Press-Herald* editorialized: “It’s a philosophy that values well-rounded athletes over one-sport wonders, competitiveness over mere victory, fitness as a way of life rather than a seasonal obsession.”

The report is spurring action far beyond Maine’s local schools. This summer, the Georgia High School Association adopted the UMaine guide as a textbook for its coaching eligibility program. Dozens of other states have considered adopting *Sports Done Right* principles.

At home, the program is not without controversy. Some parents, reacting to the idea that all team members should be given a chance to play, derided the program as “Sports Done Light.”

—J.O.H.

Student athletes will be able to search and explore the Athletic IQ college and university database and thereby maximize their prospects for finding the right institutions.

Beyond the issue of access are challenges related to the optimum distribution and placement of student athletes into appropriate levels of competition—and into specific environments where their opportunity for success will be greatest. The Athletic IQ database will be segmented into the specific team and position aspirations of college-bound students, helping enrollment managers and coaches connect with the right students on two levels: in the larger sense of recruiting students with the “double hook” of academic and athletic matching criteria; and in narrower searches to identify and target a handful of essential “position athletes.”

Better academic *and* athletic matches between students and

institutions will produce many benefits, including the following:

- 1) Rosters will be more complete in every sport and on every level. At present, there are many underpopulated teams, particularly at the Division III level.
- 2) Competition will be improved as teams will be more evenly matched.
- 3) The pride and fulfillment of student athletes will be elevated as a result of increased playing time and more realistic competition.
- 4) Retention and graduation rates will be improved. Federal statistics indicate that student athletes who start college immediately after high school, attend full time and enroll continuously in all terms are more likely to earn degrees than those with other attendance patterns. With better matches between students and institutions, this pattern can be bolstered.

The hyper-glorified commercialization of big-time collegiate competition makes it easy to lose sight of the fact that participation in intercollegiate athletics is supposed to be an integral component of the overall academic experience. Opportunities to achieve personal fulfillment, learn self-discipline and build self-esteem, to develop a team mentality, appreciate good sportsmanship and practice leadership skills are just a few examples of what actually belongs on the ultimate scoreboard of NCAA competition.

***Bryan E. Carlson** is president of Collegiate Enterprise Solutions, which has been retained by Athletic IQ to implement a national membership campaign for colleges and universities. He is also president of the Registry for College and University Presidents and former president of Mount Ida College. Email: becarlson@comcast.net.*

Now! Offer students **more** education financing **choices** with **Access Group**



- **Our new Graduate PLUS Loan with no guarantor fees**
- **No-fee Federal Stafford Loans**
- **No-fee private loans**
- **Money-saving payment incentives**
- **Great service, too!**

Visit us at
AccessGroup.Org
 or call us at 800-227-2151



Terms and fees are subject to change.
 ©2006 Access Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

Bok's Book

Joseph M. Cronin

Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More; Derek Bok; Princeton University Press; 2005; \$29.95

Twice in 30 years, Harvard University asked Derek Bok to calm the troubled waters. In 1969, student demonstrators

took over Harvard's University Hall, and President Nathan Pusey told police to recapture it. Bok, then dean of Harvard Law School, invited angry law school students into his office and sent out for donuts.

He served as Harvard president from 1971 to 1991, and will hold the reins again "ad interim" in 2006-07.

Bok may treat students kindly but he is a relentless critic of colleges and universities whose highly intelligent faculty, he contends, fail to maximize student achievement. He deplores the inadequate teaching preparation of Ph.D. faculty and the lack of attention to English composition, moral reasoning and world citizenship.

Bok believes that American universities win world respect because of their research productivity and their graduate schools rather than undergraduate outcomes. He cites UCLA higher education scholar Alexander Astin's finding that half of the alumni of selective colleges do not think that college contributed "a great deal" to their writing, reasoning and analytic skills. He complains that many Hispanic and black students, and athletes of all races, are poorly served in college.

In many ways, *Our Underachieving Colleges* continues the critical analysis Bok began as Harvard president when, in annual reports, he reviewed the status of education in each of the university's professional schools—law,

medicine, business and education. He has long pursued better ways to prepare students for professional and civic leadership. As president, Bok also fought to win approval for a modern undergraduate core curriculum including moral reasoning, social analysis and foreign cultures. He argues now for required undergraduate courses in American government and world affairs, noting that half of bachelor's-degree holders avoid such courses.

Bok carefully reviews the research controversies on how best to improve collegian writing skills and concludes that the teaching of writing requires highly professional teachers of composition. He wants oral communication back in the course of study. He denounces excessive reliance on short-answer and multiple-choice exams, with too few requests for complex problem-solving or critical thinking essays.

Bok does not oppose vocational courses or opportunities to explore professions as an undergraduate. He respects the rigor of engineering programs, but says too many engineering students experience declines in writing ability and political participation. Bok asks faculty to evaluate the impact of each major on the important aims of education, not just successful professional preparation.

He feels that colleges should teach ethics, and that too few, other than church-affiliated colleges, raise moral questions. Bok believes community service projects build character. He advocates civic education, global understanding and learning about racial and ethnic diversity, especially for future scientists and engineers.

His concerns are very different from those of conservative critics such as Allan Bloom, William Bennett, Lynne Cheney and Dinesh D'Souza whose work, he says, relies on caricatures and has made little difference in the academy.

Bok delves into the research on what colleges achieve, especially the analyses of Astin and the periodic summaries of Ernest Pascarella and Patrick Terenzini on "How College Affects Students." He concludes that colleges too often achieve modest gains even as parents and employers

hold much higher expectations.

Bok is not sanguine about the prospects for reform. He suggests that trustees ask tough questions about the purpose of a college and request measures of effectiveness in meeting academic objectives. He deplores national rankings, except for the Pew Foundation survey of student engagement, which takes into account how many probing conversations students had with a professor, how many papers they wrote and how many community service projects they completed. But only 25 percent of colleges and very few research universities participate!

Bok does not believe that online colleges will provide better education, and he worries that they may shortchange the liberal arts. My own experience finds the best online colleges seek state approvals and accreditation from agencies requiring substantial study of the arts and sciences. The enduring online colleges seeking academic respectability will read Bok's diagnoses and prescriptions for interactive instruction with great interest, perhaps more closely than self-satisfied liberal arts colleges.

Who should read this book? First of all, accreditation teams before they visit a college, and the campus self-study teams reviewing academic strengths and weaknesses. So should leaders of state agencies responsible for planning and reporting progress to governors and legislators. New presidents, provosts and deans might also benefit, as they embark upon long-range planning. I also recommend this book to Harvard presidential nominees, and to the Harvard Corporation Board and Overseers who ratify the final selection. Harvard has a new undergraduate curriculum in need of some decisions. They should know that a once and current president is standing right behind them, spurring the nation's oldest college to greater achievements.

*Joseph M. Cronin is president of *Edvisors*. He is the former president of Bentley College and former Massachusetts secretary of educational affairs. Email: Edvisors@aol.com.*



- White non-Hispanics as a percentage of new U.S. high school graduates in 1980: **83%**
- In 2005: **66%**
- Whites as a percentage of students offered fall 2006 admission to one of the 10 campuses of the University of California (UC) system: **36%**
- Asian-Americans as a percentage of students offered admission to UC: **36%**
- African-Americans, American Indians and Chicano/Latinos as a combined percentage of students offered admission to UC: **22%**
- Foreign citizens, U.S. dual citizens, and U.S. permanent residents as a percentage of students offered fall 2006 admission to Harvard: **19%**
- New Englanders as a percentage of students offered fall 2006 admission: **16%**
- Of 19 members of federal Commission on the Future of Higher Education, number who attended commission's single New England hearing: **5**
- Number of master's degrees granted by New England colleges and universities in math in 1997: **268**
- Number in 2004: **335**
- Number of master's degrees granted by New England colleges and universities in computer sciences in 1997: **584**
- Number in 2004: **1,496**
- Percentage of America's rural labor force that is engaged in farming: **7%**
- Percentage of Massachusetts cranberry farmers who supplement their incomes with other jobs: **42%**
- Number of college students worldwide studying outside their home countries in 1999: **1,750,000**
- Number in 2004: **2,500,000**
- Percentage of all sub-Saharan African college students who study abroad: **6%**
- Percentage of all North American college students who do: **1%**
- Percentage of U.S. voters with annual household income of more than \$100,000 who say they are driving less because of rising gas prices: **34%**
- Percentage of those making less than \$30,000 who say they are driving less: **67%**
- Percentage who blame oil-producing countries for rising gas prices: **82%**
- Percentage who blame Americans who drive gas-guzzlers: **52%**
- Number of pages of car ads included in January edition of *Boston Sunday Globe* featuring magazine cover story on low commuter rail ridership: **32**

Sources: 1,2 *Postsecondary Education Opportunity*; 3,4,5 University of California; 6,7 Harvard University; 8 CONNECTION analysis; 9,10,11,12 Webcaspar; 13 Carsey Institute, University of New Hampshire; 14 University of Massachusetts Dartmouth; 15,16,17,18 UNESCO; 19,20,21,22 Quinnipiac University Poll; 23 CONNECTION analysis

Streamlined financial solutions.



TD Banknorth Higher Education Group is your course to success.

A TD Banknorth relationship manager will partner with you to successfully help you manage your college or university's finances for maximum return. We will customize a suite of financial products to fit your needs and help you reach your goals. Our services include:

- Cash Management
- Investment Management*
- Insurance*
- Deposit and Lending Services

TD Banknorth Higher Education Group knows that no two organizations are the same. It's time you have someone working with you who will review your needs and recommend key strategies for improvement. It's just another way we go above and beyond.

Begin by meeting with a local advisor.
Call 800 833-2098.



The New England Board of Higher Education gratefully acknowledges the following sponsors whose financial support makes our programs, conferences, events and CONNECTION magazine possible.

Gilbane Building Company
JPMorgan Chase Bank
Nellie Mae Education Foundation
TD Banknorth Higher Education Group

The John H. and H. Naomi Tomfohrde Foundation
National Science Foundation
Genzyme Corporation
Cisco Systems
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
University of Rhode Island

Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority
New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation
Webster Bank

For information on NEBHE's sponsorship program, call Carolyn Morwick at 617.357.9620 x118.

CONNECTION

THE JOURNAL OF THE NEW ENGLAND BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

New England Board of Higher Education
45 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111-1305



Nonprofit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Hanover, NH 03755
Permit No. 91