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Trustees $200, State 10%, Students screwed!!

The Comment

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EDUCATION AT WHAT COST??

by Bill Auger

The Massachusetts Secretary of Educational Affairs, Mr. Paul Parks, made some rather startling recommendations concerning the future of Higher Education in this state. Secretary Parks stated that, "The Commonwealth's fiscal crisis requires extreme measures." Therefore Secretary Parks claimed the need to realize a 30% savings over Fiscal Year 1973 expenditures. The choices and consequences are hard, "but fiscal reality requires their consideration," state Secretary Parks. The magnitude of the cuts involved and the consequent injury to the quality of education in this state is readily recognized by those who propose the following cutbacks: I went to make perfectly clear, that the following recommendations were developed entirely by the office of Secretary Parks.

In the first stage of the Secretary's proposals will require the elimination of educational subsidies to cultural institutions such as the Science Museum, reductions in the budgets of the council on Arts and Humanities, also reductions selected Department of Education programs, including the Experimental School System. The major impact of stage one, would be the reduction of approximately $10 million dollars in the allocation for the previous mentioned higher education segments, and the termination of approximately 30% additional Higher Education personnel. This measure would lead to an increase in student/faculty ratio, and would be particularly significant at the University of Lowell, S.M.U., and the Community Colleges.

The second stage of options for reducing the budget would mean a transferring of 3000 community college students to state college with excess capacity. A further increase in the University of Massachusetts student/faculty ratio. The elimination of library acquisition and administration monies, a 3.5 million dollar reduction. The elimination of Disadvantaged Student Aid within the college and universities, a 2.1 million dollar reduction. Also the elimination of the State Scholarship Program a 15.5 million dollar reduction. The combined effect

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EDITORIAL

This special issue of the COMMENT is meant to inform. The information within these four pages contains facts, figures, and opinions of all of us about the story concerning the present tuition increase and budget cuts. This will help us unravel the mystery.

The Rally, sponsored by SGA, on September 17th in the Union foyer is an opportunity for all of us to come together and voice our opinions, while realizing just where we as students stand.

So What's This Rally

BY Toni Coyne

An informational rally will be held to inform all students of the pressures on public institutions of higher learning by the Massachusetts state legislature to cut expenses. Demands of the legislature include a 1% increase in the board budget cuts and a $200 per year tuition hike for all in-state students and $600 for out-of-state students.

A coalition formed mostly by student government associations from across the state, university, community colleges, and state universities met in August to respond to the Board of Trustees tuition hike and the budget cuts. The response to these two items is to come from the student body throughout the state - a strong 100,000, on Wednesday, September 17.

All questions concerning the two areas of budget cuts and tuition hikes will and should be raised by students and members of the college community. To answer questions and statements the rally will be open forum. A workout following the rally will be led by Jams Spoon, SGA President and Student Trustee, to allow student input to possible alternatives that can be worked on.

There is a vast need for information to be disseminated to all those within the public higher institutions, this will be the time to be used by all. The Rally will be on Wednesday, September 17th at 12 noon in the Student Union Foyer.

Financial Aid

by Richard Pacheco

College students seem to have an insatiable need for money. And with the current profit rates and the financial aid that is available frozen at 90% of last year's allowance most, if not all, students across the state will be hard pressed economically. Right now at Bridgewater State there is about $200,000 in federal funds available for financial aid which can not be touched until approximately $10,000 in matching State funds are found. At the present time the Financial Aid Office is still accepting applications for aid but it is doubtful if these applications can be processed until the matching funds are approved. These funds don't necessarily have to come from the state but if the college could find some other source of funds the red tape could be unraveled.

If the off campus work/study program is to be expanded and utilized by students and members of the college community these organizations could be the source of the 20% additional funds which are needed for that program. Another avenue that has already been explored by only 15% of the students in the state college system is the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant. Last year there was approximately $136 million which went unspent in this program: (B.E.O.G.) is the only one which would not be affected by matching funds and still has monies available for financial aid. Any student who began college after April 1, 1973 is eligible and should apply for this grant.

At the present time there is a law on the books called the Willis-Harrington Act which deals with regulating state funds concerning higher education. According to the law no more than 25% of these funds may be used for financial aid in public institutions of higher education and no less than 75% of these funds are to go to private institutions of higher learning. At the present time only 18.2% of these funds are being channeled into the state college system and the remaining 81.8% of these funds are going to private colleges.

This seems to indicate that private institutions, sure so than state colleges, have a powerful lobby at the general court.

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of these steps will require the termination of an estimated 190-personnel. However, the major impact will be on student ability to get higher education. Elimination of the State Scholarship Program will terminate aid for 18,278 students.

The third and most drastic stage would close four institutions, Massachusetts College of Art, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Massachusetts Bay Community College and remaining insti-

mation. I am shocked that the Secretary would consider closing two of the most unique institutions in our state. Massachusetts College of Art and Massachusetts Maritime Academy, both have unique academic offerings and a very high placement rate of graduates. The final proposal of Secretary Parks would be to redefine the responsibility for funding the community college system. This would entail an equal three-way split of responsibility among the state, localities, and students.

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Mistaken Notion

by Ray Raposa

The summer has come to an end leaving behind some events that have affected public higher education. When school closed this past spring there were two bills pending in the General Court which dealt with an increase in tuition at state colleges and universities. These two bills died during the session and the tuition question laid dormant for a while. If you happened to pick up a copy of the “Boston Globe” on Monday, July 21st, you could read an article by political columnist David Farrell. Farrell revealed a plan to hike state college tuitions. According to Farrell a plan that would either double or possibly quadruple tuition in state colleges had been lined up by the leadership of the House and Senate. The plan called for a 10% cut in the total public higher education budget. The plan also called for the tuition collected at the individual institutions to remain the same. To each campus this could appear to be the best plan had this money stay within reach. However, the state allotment to higher education would never be increased. Any added expenditure or increase in rates would mean an increase in tuition to fully cover the cost involved.

Farrell stated that the different Board of Trustees could raise tuition on their own or each year they could just leave the problem of a tuition increase for the legislature to handle. The trustees were left with different options: one, go along with the plan; two, be faced with a seven hundred to one thousand dollar tuition increase by the legislature; or third, the trustees themselves could raise tuition. The article went on to say that if the tuition in the public sector did not increase the private colleges would be wiped out of existence because of the much cheaper state schools.

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This measure would produce state budget savings of 26 million dollars.

“Closing of the four institutions will turn out approximately 4,700 dollars in light of steps already taken, it would be difficult to reconnect with higher education. Closing would also produce additional layoffs of approximately 640 personnel.” stated Secretary Parks.

A summary of Secretary Parks proposals would produce the following major aggregate effects upon education. First, the state would save 87 million dollars. Second, the termination of approximately 2,150 employees, 99% of whom are employed in the field of higher education. The terminations breakdown is as follows: 1,147 faculty, 316 professionals, and 687 classified employees. Third, the jeopardizing of higher education for nearly 25,000 students, and excluding an estimated minimum of these students.

Secretary Parks expressed his concern that a step in the second stage would not come before the first stage. However the options he said were in no particular order of priority. He also urged that the student enrollment be the last source of reductions.

Part of the job done by the staff of the Massachusetts State College System Central Office is to coordinate the different aspects of the state colleges. Mr. Farrell’s article was picked up by the central office staff and quickly surveyed. The situation was faxed as urgent and an ad hoc committee of the Board of Trustees was set up to study tuition. The staff quickly collected facts and figures to be used. The ad hoc committee met with its staff and voted to recommend a tuition increase as a result. On August 19th the full Board of Trustees approved the committees recommendation that tuition be increased by two hundred dollars for state tuition and six hundred dollars for out-of-state tuition.

David Farrell’s article is not the lone cause for the increase in tuition. The article was only a catalyst which stimulated the situation to point where almost no one could doubt the increase. Farrell finished the article with this statement: “One of the targets of the new plan is the well-to-do parents who send their children to the state subsidized colleges soley to buck the much higher and more realistic tuition of the private institutions.” Mr. Farrell probably missed the facts that 70% of the students come from families who earn less than $15,000 a year and that 23% (part of the 70% mentioned above) come from families whose earnings are less than $9,000.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Farrell’s article appeared this summer while most students were busy earning money to pay for their college education. If school was in session possibly the increase could have been delayed until all facts would be known about our student capacity to pay an increase.
RALLY
Wednesday September 17
12 Noon
Student Union Foyer

★ Budget Cutbacks
★ Tuition Hikes

How it affects you and your education

Open Forum

★ give your opinions, ideas and alternatives

1. Age________ Sex________
2. Can you afford a tuition hike?
3. Do you work?
4. With the tuition hike, will you have to find another source of income?
5. Will you march to the State House over the budget cuts?
6. Would you not pay the added increase
7. Would you be willing to volunteer your services to work on proposed budget cuts?
8. Would you boycott classes over tuition increases and budget cuts?
9. Are you concerned about the 10 percent budget cut and tuition hike?
10. What do you feel you can do to help the state save 10 percent of the budget?