In an age of limits, colleges and universities are expanding, with the aid of taxpayers with increasingly limited resources. “Colleges stand to lose billions of dollars for research, facilities, and other purposes if Congressional leaders hold firm in their pledge to ban earmarks, the spending that individual members direct to their home states and favorite projects outside of the competitive processes,” Kevin Kiley reported in the December 17, 2010 issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education. “Some of the biggest losers would be colleges in states whose lawmakers in Washington hold top positions on appropriations committees, and which have traditionally received substantial earmarks.”

“In spending bills for the 2010 fiscal year, colleges in Texas, Mississippi, and California received the most Congressionally directed money for academic projects, according to an analysis of data by Taxpayers for Common Senses, a nonprofit watchdog group.” Although the earmarks account for “about one-half of 1 percent of all appropriations in 2010,” according to Kiley, they finance spending that is beyond the wildest dreams of most businesses.

“Earmarks brought about $2.25 billion to colleges and universities in 2008, the most recent year for which The Chronicle has conducted a comprehensive analysis,” Kiley wrote. “Those earmarks financed about 2,300 projects, including campus buildings, research projects, and research centers.”

You can get an idea of how much individual universities can rake in from this process by looking at the coffers of Ole Miss. “The Chronicle’s 2008 analysis of higher education earmarks found that Mississippi State University and the University of Mississippi topped the list of institutions receiving earmarks that year, receiving $40 million and $37.5-million, respectively,” Kiley recounted.

Taxpayers may not have much reason to feel bailed out and stimulated, but university officials do. “If Wash-

continues on page 2
WASHINGTON D.C. does put an end to earmarks, the University of Nebraska will have several reasons to be concerned,” analysts at the Platte Institute argue. “In fact, about 40 million reasons to be concerned.”

“That’s because ‘pork’ money from federal earmarks has been pouring into the University of Nebraska’s coffers over the last three years.” The Platte Institute is based in Nebraska.

“Information gathered by the Platte Institute shows the University of Nebraska system has received $40.6 million over the last three years.” Platte’s analysts conclude, “When you compare that to the amount universities in the Big 10 Conference, which UNL will be joining this summer, received over the same period, you can see how disproportionate UNL’s figure is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Federal Earmark Dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Nebraska</td>
<td>$40,666,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Wisconsin</td>
<td>$28,327,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Iowa</td>
<td>$15,926,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penn State University</td>
<td>$15,700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan State University</td>
<td>$14,256,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Indiana</td>
<td>$13,041,746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio State University</td>
<td>$10,768,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>$10,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Minnesota</td>
<td>$10,207,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Illinois</td>
<td>$9,694,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purdue University</td>
<td>$9,449,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern University</td>
<td>$4,830,014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Of the more than $40 million going to the University of Nebraska, U.S. Senator Ben Nelson played a role in acquiring all but roughly $900,000 of it.”

Although ending earmarks may not close the deficit, taxpayers might question the value of popping for shiny new university buildings when they themselves are struggling with grocery bills. Moreover, as economist Richard Vedder discovered, going into debt to change their economic situation has not exactly proven to be a passport to the street of dreams for many students.

Vedder found that “approximately 60 percent of the increase in the number of college graduates from 1992 to 2008 worked in jobs that the BLS considers relatively low skilled—occupations where many participants have only high school diplomas and often even less. [Italics Vedder’s].”

“Only a minority of the increment in our nation’s stock of college graduates is filling jobs historically considered as requiring a bachelor’s degree or more,” Vedder wrote in a column which appeared in the December 9, 2010 issue of The Chronicle. A professor at Ohio University, Vedder also heads the Center for College Affordability and Productivity.

Law Professor Defends Constitution

Such a stance makes him rare in an echelon of academia devoted to international law, and he’s following us on Twitter! “If the federal government can require consumers to purchase health insurance, the federal government has complete, unchecked, unlimited power,” Professor David Steinberg wrote of federal Judge Henry Hudson’s December decision.

“Skeptical?” the Thomas Jefferson School of Law professor asks. “Let’s consider a few examples.” The auto industry has been on the skids in recent years. So if the federal government can require people to buy health insurance, can’t the federal government also require that you must buy a new car? Or better yet – why not a General Motors car? After all, thanks to the Obama bailout, the federal government now owns a ‘stake’ in General Motors. And if the government can require that you buy a General Motors car, why not The Volt? The Volt is the poorly conceived electric hybrid produced by General Motors, which retails for a cool $41,000.

The Thomas Jefferson School of Law is located in San Diego. –MAK
CAMPUS COSTS THREATEN BRITISH LEFT

The recent outbreak of rioting in London over increased tuition costs for British universities inspired apologists to defend the violence as “healthy protests that were signs of a ‘vibrant democracy’ and ‘an engaged youth.’”

Not so fast, said Adam Shaw, who wrote in The American Thinker that others who laid the blame on “a generation mollycoddled into a sense of entitlement by socialist Britain” were closer to the truth. But, he said what really ignited the passions of “squads of angry leftists” was that the tuition hike “will radically reform the main left-wing recruitment center and training ground – the university.”

For more than 50 years – ever since taxpayers have borne all or most of the burden for higher education — universities have increasingly attracted “students” who normally would not have gone to college, but were attracted by the atmosphere of drinking, drugs and casual sex. Meanwhile, less qualified faculty promoted university education more as an “experience” rather than an opportunity to develop disciplined study habits and actually learn something.

The tuition hike threatens to overturn this happy socialist state of affairs by attracting qualified teaching staffs, students who want to learn, and more options for meaningful employment after graduation. Shaw notes that “to the privileged left who have hijacked the system and used it for their own financial and political ends, this idea represents the greatest threat in a generation.”

CHINA’S NEW REPORT CARD

Who or what will finally get America’s attention and force us to stop bickering over political ideology and start focusing on improving our educational system? How about this?

Chester Finn, a Hoover Institution Senior Fellow, recently noted in a Wall Street Journal piece that “on math, reading and science tests given to 15-year-olds in 65 countries last year, Shanghai teenagers topped every other jurisdiction in all three subjects.”

While Dr. Finn noted that the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)only tested students from one city, “Americans would be making a big mistake to suppose that Shanghai’s result is some sort of aberration.” After all, the results attained by 20 million students in Shanghai could easily multiply as much as 50-fold in the next decade.

As for what explains the high success rate of Chinese students, test officials cite the city’s competitiveness, “a very high level of student engagement, and an ambitious curriculum.” And that’s just for starters.

VEXED BY TEXTS?

Some would call it “tough love.” Others might call it something unprintable. In any case, Virginia is not a state where students should mess around with texting in class.

The state’s Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli recently ruled that “not only can school officials seize students’ cell phones and laptops, but they can also read their text messages if there are ‘reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school.’”

At issue was a request concerning the controversy over cyber-bullying and how school officials can deal with “sexting,” or “sexual messages sent via text, without violating the state law themselves.”

Cuccinelli ruled that instead of sharing such information with others or dealing with it on their own, school officials should immediately contact law enforcement.

While his decision was welcomed in many quarters, it was not met with universal approval. Rutherford Institute president John Whitehead noted in a letter to Cuccinelli that he regarded the opinion as an “ill-advised invitation to school officials to invade the Fourth Amendment rights of students,” adding that searches by schools to determine if students were using their phones to “cyberbully” others “could raise free speech concerns.”

“Students don’t check their constitutional rights when they enter school,” noted Whitehead, who said that “Cuccinelli’s opinion failed to advise school officials on how they should judge whether there are truly reasonable grounds to invade student privacy by examining their cell phones.”

The cyber-bullying issue is reported to be a problem for nearly half of U.S. teenagers, and has been “cited as a reason for suicide attempts, the third lead-
SQUEAKY CHALK

continued from page 3

ing cause of death among 10-24 year olds.”

DON’T WORRY: BE HAPPY

Author and radio talk show host Dennis Prager recently noted in NationalReviewOnline that conservatives are definitely happier than liberals. This isn’t just his opinion – It’s a scientific fact, since well-respected think tanks like the Pew Research Center and the National Science Foundation agree with this assessment.

In a recent speech at a Los Angeles High School, Prager explained that conservatism requires a leap of faith in one’s ability to triumph over adversity, adding that the liberals’ utopian dreams are one big reason that they’ll never be satisfied. In fact, it condemns them to a life of grumbling and complaining about their country and their lot in life.

In a predictable reaction to his talk, the liberal faculty hated it while conservative students ate it up.

WEIGHTY SUBJECTS

It was bad enough when kids came home with a note from school about their grades. What if Johnny came home, armed with charts and graphs, showing his parents that school officials had graded him overweight?

The Daily Caller reported that a new policy decision by the Flagstaff Arizona school system means some kids will be doing exactly that, starting next fall. The situation has enraged some local parents groups, along with Barry Hess, vice chairman of the Arizona Libertarian Party, who called the new policy “absurd,” adding that he’s “surprised that parents aren’t coming out against this with pitchforks and saying, ‘shut up, stop ruining our kids.’”

However, a “Flagstaff Unified School District human resources representative, who did not provide a name, said ‘this is not really anything new, it’s not a policy. I’m not even sure it can be called a policy. Every child that shows something significant in testing will have a letter sent home.’”

Meanwhile, the local medical community reports that children as young as 4 are being diagnosed with diabetes, and half of all district school children are either overweight or borderline overweight.

While some critics visualize potential damage to childrens’ self esteem resulting from the undue focus on their weight, others are already looking ahead to the shape of the workforce in future years. Figures from a recent study of 17,000 workers in Maine, the University of New England found that “the percentage of obese workers will increase from 62 percent to 80 percent” in the next nine years.

The fact that one-third of Maine kids and two-thirds of Maine adults are overweight or obese prompted Victoria Roberts, a pediatrician at the Barbara Bush Children’s Hospital at Maine Media Center to call it “the biggest threat to children’s health, more common than asthma, lead poisoning, autism, eating disorders or ADHD.”

A NOVEL IDEA

One of the latest arrivals in the media marketplace is a website called Figment.com, which one of its creators, Jason Lewis, viewed as “a sort of Facebook for the teenage set,” according to the New York Times.

But Lewis and co-creator Dana Goodyear, a New Yorker staff writer, soon realized that their audience had no interest in another Facebook. Instead, what they wanted “was to read and write and discover new content, but around the content itself.”

Figment.com is “an experiment in online litera-
SQUEAKY CHALK

continued from page 4

ture, a free platform for young people to read and write fiction, both on their computers and on their cell-phones.”

Dana Goodyear says the idea came to her after writing a “6,000 word article for the New Yorker about young Japanese women who had been busy composing fiction on their mobile phones. In the article, she declared it ‘the first literary genre to emerge from the cellular age.’”

Will this idea translate effectively to the teenage literary set in the United States? Jacob Lewis says he hopes Figment will eventually attract over a million users and offer publishers a chance to discover new talent on the website.

MEDIA BREAKTHROUGH ON EDUCATION

by: Malcolm A. Kline

A seminal trend may be occurring in media coverage of education, at least at the K-12 level: The press is starting to notice where the problem comes from.

In 2010:

• The Economist ran an article showing that you can’t solve education problems by throwing money at them;

• The L. A. Times conducted an investigation of teacher salaries in the City of the Angels; and

• Newsweek ran an article by Michelle Rhee, the former Washington, D.C. chancellor who became the bête noire of teachers’ unions everywhere.

“Many school systems that were not showered with extra funds did much better,” noted The Economist on November 25, 2010. “Schools in the state of Saxony, in Germany, in Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Poland have all raised their games.”

“Even poor countries such as Chile and Ghana have made progress.” That The Economist would take notice of studies that discover such trends is nothing short of seismic. Although the venerable magazine did hard-hitting coverage of the old Soviet Union in its final days, usually the publication is so biased in favor of centralized, or as they would put it centralised, government solutions to problems that the economist it seems to be evoking is John Maynard Keynes.

Meanwhile, back in the States, L.A.’s premier paper, which has given the educational establishment prime positioning on its pages in the past, turned around and gave it fits. “The L.A. Unified School District Teachers Union made good on their promise to protest the Los Angeles Times over the paper’s release of evaluations of over 6,000 teachers in the district,” Accuracy in Academia chairman Don Irvine reported on September 20, 2010.

As for Rhee, in her cover article in Newsweek, she pulls no punches. “We have textbook manufac-
turers, teachers’ unions, and even food vendors that work hard to dictate and determine policy,” she writes. “The public-employee unions in D.C., including the teachers’ union, spent huge sums of money to defeat [former Washington, D.C. mayor Adrian] Fenty.”

“In fact, the new chapter president has said his No. 1 priority is job security for teachers, but there is no big organized interest group that defends and promotes the interests of children.”

Even the Huffington Post posted an article by the mayor of Los Angeles blasting teachers’ unions. This last posting is perhaps the most remarkable of all.

The avowedly liberal Democratic mayor is a former teachers’ union organizer himself. Moreover, it’s something that the last Republican mayor of L.A, Richard Riordan, would never have done.

Riordan actually had RINO, for Republican in Name Only, buttons produced for his campaign. The term has since become a pejorative that its targets try to avoid.

As well, The Associated Press might actually be onto something in its education coverage. “An Associated Press-Stanford University Poll on education found that 68 percent of adults believe parents deserve heavy blame for what’s wrong with the U.S. education system — more than teachers, school administrators, the government or teachers unions,” Donna Gordon Blankenship wrote in an AP story that went out on December 12, 2010. “Only 35 percent of those surveyed agreed that teachers deserve a great deal or a lot of the blame.”

“Moms were more likely than dads — 72 percent versus 61 percent — to say parents are at fault. Conservatives were more likely than moderates or liberals to blame parents. Those who said parents are to blame were more likely to cite a lack of student discipline and low expectations for students as serious problems in schools. They were also more likely to see fighting and low test scores as big problems.”

The parents surveyed went on to show why they make such terrific enablers. “Most said education in their local public schools is excellent or good, but 67 percent also believe the U.S. is falling behind the rest of the world when it comes to education,” Blankenship reported. “But a majority of parents see improvement in the system since they were in school: 55 percent believe their children are getting a better education than they did, and three-quarters rate the quality of education at their child’s school as excellent or good. Most say their child’s school is doing a good job preparing students for college, the work force and life as an adult.”

No V-Shaped Recovery

A Nobel-prize-winning economist delivered two pieces of bad news at a seminar sponsored by the Center for American Progress (CAP) on December 3, 2010. “Major countries have had the economic downturn we have but are experiencing the V-shaped recovery we haven’t,” Michael Spence, a professor emeritus at Stanford said at the CAP event. He also noted in the conference at the National Press Club that “The big employers in America are government, health care, construction and hotels and restaurants.” Hmm, could the cause and effect there be reversed?—MAK
Dear Reader,

Happy New Year! We hope that it will be a prosperous one for you. We have done our level best to provide the most prosperous coverage of higher education that we are capable of delivering. In so doing, we try to get beyond the hype of university press releases, many of which bear a startling similarity to stories about institutions of higher learning.

On our website and in our newsletter, as well as in podcasts and videos, Accuracy in Academia covers about 300 professors a year from around as many colleges. Additionally, we have gone a step further and published our own textbook, *Voodoo Anyone? How to Understand Economics Without Really Trying*, which is in use in several university classrooms and, arguably, particularly timely right now.

To increase our outreach, and give students interning in Washington, D. C., where we are headquartered, a chance to be exposed to authors they might not otherwise encounter on classroom reading lists, AIA features noteworthy writers in its author’s nights on Capitol Hill. These are part of AIA’s Conservative University lecture series, which are made possible by a generous grant from the Frank A. Fusco Foundation.

As of this writing, we are already scheduling about a half a dozen of these in 2011 with speakers who we have already received commitments from including:

1. Clemson professor C. Bradley Thompson, author of *Neoconservatism: An Obituary for an Idea*
2. Madeleine Sackler, the director of The Lottery, a documentary about charter schools
3. David Horowitz, author of *Reforming Our Universities: The Campaign for an Academic Bill of Rights*
4. Amity Shlaes, author of *The Forgotten Man: A New History of the Great Depression*
5. Ohio University economist Richard Vedder, author of *Going Broke By Degree*, and head of the Center for College Affordability and Productivity
6. Vanderbilt University professor Carol M. Swain, author of the forthcoming *Be the People: A Call to Reclaim America’s Faith and Promise*

None of this work would be possible without your generous support.

All the best,

Mal Kline
Executive Director