

# Enrollment MANAGEMENT

REPORT

Route to:


Practical Guidance in Recruitment, Admissions, Retention & Financial Aid

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 11

FEBRUARY 2007

## SNAPSHOTS

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Tuition hikes could attract more applicants; application can communicate your college's values; determine best ways to balance need for income with accessibility to students. **Page 2**

### RESEARCH

A study shows that incoming freshmen express a strong motivation to graduate from college, but their academic and study skills and their finances may prevent that. **Page 7**

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**DISMISSAL:** Discrimination was not a factor in the dismissal of a student with a low GPA. **Page 11**

## COVER STORY

### Find out why students left; recapture them with one mailing

Stopping out of programs is common when it comes to busy adult students. But what if there was a way for you to find out why they left and entice them into returning at the same time?

The Office of Adult Students and Evening Services at the **University of North Carolina at Charlotte** decided to try to recapture students with a year or less left to complete their degrees.

It sent surveys to those who were seniors before stopping out. The survey asked why they decided to leave without finishing their degrees. Also enclosed was a contact card that offered an incentive for those interested in returning. See if the strategy worked. **Full story, pages 4-5.**

#### Get student input with this survey

Find out why students stop out of your program with help from this survey. **See page 5.**

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Enlist resources across campus to retain students

The University of Miami's graduation rates have improved steadily over the past 10 years. Learn how UM involved faculty and staff across the campus in an effort to provide what students need to stay enrolled. **Page 3**

### What are the top enrollment management issues?

A seasoned professional and a new admissions official name the top issues faced by enrollment management officials. Find out what challenges this father-daughter team identify as most problematic. **Page 6**

### Comprehensive learning plan boosts student success

Learn strategies that have helped Valencia Community College graduate the most students of any community college in the United States for many years. See what parts of VCC's plan will work at your institution. **Page 9**

### A great team makes innovations possible

Jim Maraviglia, assistant vice president, admissions, recruitment and financial aid at California State Polytechnic University - San Luis Obispo, credits his unit's innovations to great staff members. Read about his management style. **Page 12**

## Consider whether raising tuition could increase applications

If the experience of a number of institutions is a guide, increasing tuition could enhance applicant numbers.



Applications increased significantly following tuition hikes at **Ursinus College**, the **University of Notre Dame**, **Bryn Mawr College**, **Rice University**, the **University of Richmond**, and **Hendrix College**, reported the *New York Times*.

The institutions raised tuition to be in line with similar colleges, but also increased financial aid so that students do not necessarily spend more to attend. ■

## Let application communicate your institution's mission

Aligning your college's application process with its goals could help you attract students who are the best fit for your institution.

**Bryn Mawr College** applicants may donate their application fee to the charity or community organization of their choice. An applicant may either submit a \$50 application fee, a fee waiver, or a copy of the receipt or cancelled check from her \$50 donation.

**Maureen McGonigle**, senior associate director of admissions, created the option to reinforce the message that Bryn Mawr women have "a desire to make a meaningful contribution to the world," said **Jenny Rickard**, dean of admissions and financial aid.



In the first two years of the program's existence, approximately 25 percent of applicants donated their fees. The class of 2009 contributed \$22,700 to charities, and the class of 2010 gave \$23,350.

"The fee revenue we forfeited could have been spent on a publication telling applicants that Bryn Mawr women make a meaningful contribution to the world. Instead, we encourage our applicants to do it and to start now," Rickard said.

To find out more, check out the Bryn Mawr admissions Web site at [www.brynmawr.edu/admissions/applicationoptions.shtml](http://www.brynmawr.edu/admissions/applicationoptions.shtml). ■

## Balance institution income with accessibility to students

Most universities struggle to balance the benefits of higher income with their goals of achieving and maintaining diversity. Knowing how other institutions are dealing with this challenge could help you assess your college's approach.

The **University of Florida's** president **J. Bernard Machen** has proposed a \$1,000 per year tuition surcharge. The money would be used to hire more faculty members to lower the student-faculty ratio.

Since UF has one of the lowest tuition rates of any flagship university in the country, additional funding is necessary for initiatives that could boost the university into the top national rankings, Machen said.

Critics of the proposal are concerned that the surcharge will make UF less accessible to low-income students. ■



ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT REPORT	
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## Create a retention team to keep high-risk students enrolled

“Retention is everyone’s business,” said **Scott Ingold**, registrar and associate vice president of enrollment management at the **University of Miami**.

Two UM retention counselors seek out students who may be at risk of leaving the institution and connect them with any resources that may keep them enrolled. Adopting UM’s approach of enlisting the entire campus to solve individual student problems could help you keep students enrolled until they graduate.

The university has seen a steady increase in graduation rates over the past 10 years. The retention team is one initiative that has dramatically boosted retention at UM.

Among students who entered in 1991, 57.5 percent graduated in six years or less. Among students who entered in 1999, the last year for which official figures are available, 70.7 percent graduated in six years or less.

### Identify students who might leave

The retention team’s goal is to identify and assist students before they have made firm decisions to leave. Retaining students is much more difficult if they have already committed to go somewhere else and their parents have agreed to the transfer, Ingold said.

The retention team seeks out students who:

- Have been identified by faculty members, residence hall staff, or even other students as being at risk of leaving UM.
- Request a transcript to be sent to another institution.
- Are juniors and seniors but do not select courses for the next semester when the opportunity arises.
- Have made course selections but have not made payments.
- Fill out a need-help card indicating that they are having a problem of some type. These cards are given to entering students and their parents for future use and are available online.

- Are financial aid recipients who have not sent in their FAFSA forms by early January. Students who do not get their paperwork turned in on time may not be able to stay even if they want to.

- Are freshmen identified through surveys as having difficulty adjusting. Telephone survey questions are casual and conversational. Students hired to make the calls ask questions such as, “You’ve been here three weeks. How’s the transition going? Are you making friends? Are you having fun?”

### Take 5 for an effective retention strategy

Would you like more of your institution’s students to stay enrolled until they graduate? These five strategies have boosted retention at the **University of Miami**.

1. **Hire** staff members whose main job is to encourage students to stay enrolled.
2. **Identify** students who may be at risk of leaving your institution before their decisions are final.
3. **Keep** initial contacts with students as casual as possible so that they will speak more openly about their problems.
4. **Connect** students to the resources they need, whether they are academic support, financial aid or other services.
5. **Culture** the attitude that retention is the business of everyone on campus.

### Find retention solutions

Typically, if a student has been identified as being at-risk, a member of the retention team will invite him out for coffee or lunch.

The invitation is made in a casual way without mentioning that he has been referred as being at risk of leaving.

The retention team member encourages the student to talk about his experiences. Often, he will share his concerns, enabling the team member to find ways to help.

Many problems can be solved. The retention counselors connect students who are having trouble to any resources on campus that could help keep them at UM.

If a student is having problems with academics, the retention specialists might work with a dean or academic advisor in her school to find help for her.

If the problems are monetary, the financial aid office can sometimes find a solution.

### Good staffing makes program work

Ingold attributes much of the retention team’s success to hiring the right staff members for the job. “It’s really about saving people. It’s about a humanitarian effort to save students,” he said.

Team members have had backgrounds in financial aid and in counseling.

Flexibility with scheduling can also be a plus for hiring since students are sometimes most accessible outside of regular business hours. Part-time staff members can also be an option, Ingold said.

Contact Scott Ingold at [singold@miami.edu](mailto:singold@miami.edu). ■

## Recapture senior students with a little help from the mail

It's a familiar story: One of your adult students has sacrificed her time and money to earn a degree and has made it to her senior year. But because of family, work or other conflicts, she drops out of your program. Is she a lost cause, or do you have a chance at convincing her to finish your degree program?

Perhaps the student has no interest in returning to college, but you will never know unless you ask. And thanks to the **University of North Carolina at Charlotte's** Office of Adult Students and Evening Services, there's a model you can use to find out.

"There's a big push for retention nationwide, and we really wanted to address this," said **Melissa LaMarche**, coordinator of the office's 49er Finish program.

So far, the program has resulted in three former students coming back and earning their degrees, and 14 former students reapplied and are now enrolled in the university.

"We also discovered that there were 55 students who were able to reenroll without reapplying," LaMarche said.

The idea for the program is modeled after a similar initiative at the **University of New Mexico**. **Kathi Baucom**, associate provost for enrollment management at UNC Charlotte, learned about the idea during an annual **American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers'** conference. Funding came from special project funds provided by the provost's office.

Now in its pilot year, the program goes beyond

simply contacting former students. It's also geared toward working with them to help them overcome challenges that prevented them from earning a degree. The first step to doing this was to find out why the adults had left in the first place.

LaMarche's team sent surveys to 1,232 former students in March 2006. It contacted students from as far back as seven years because the time frame provided them with a manageable number of students, she said.

Those surveyed had to have dropped out with more than 90 credit hours and at least a 2.0 GPA and be in good judicial and financial standing.

"But getting the surveys to students was a challenge because many of them have moved, so it's hard to locate them," LaMarche said.

Each student was sent a two-page questionnaire to find out why they had left the institution and other information. The primary reasons listed were financial issues and courses needed weren't available at convenient times.

To encourage people to complete the surveys, door prizes were offered.

Enclosed with the survey was a contact card that could be returned to the office if the person was interested in returning to the university.

Those who submitted the cards and decided to reapply

to UNC Charlotte benefited by not having to pay the \$50 application fee that is usually required, LaMarche added. About 144 people returned the cards.

Once students expressed interest in reenrolling, LaMarche's office began the process of helping them with everything from readmission to letting them know about mentoring and tutorial programs available on campus.

The survey will be administered again in the fall of 2007. Names of students who left the university as of last academic year are already being collected and will be added to the list of students that have already been contacted.

*For more information, contact Melissa LaMarche at [mlamarch@email.uncc.edu](mailto:mlamarch@email.uncc.edu).* ■

### Find out reasons why adults stop out

The **University of North Carolina at Charlotte's** Office of Adult Students and Evening Services has made it a priority to improve the graduation rates for the university's adult students. But before this could be done, they needed to know why students left the university.

By surveying students who had stopped out before their senior year, they learned what needed to be improved before students would return to complete their degrees. The areas that UNC Charlotte's students were most concerned about included:

- **Inconsistent advisement.**
- **Unavailability of required courses at convenient times.**
- **Parking problems.**
- **Lack of financial support.** ■

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## Create a survey to find out why adult students leave

To improve retention, you have to find out why adult students leave your program in the first place. Sending a survey to former students is an effective way to do this, but what should you ask?

The **University of North Carolina at Charlotte's** Office of Adult Students and Evening Services' 49er Finish program faced this challenge.

Rather than start from scratch, program officials modified a survey that staff members found on the **East Carolina University** Web site, said **Melissa LaMarche**, coordinator of the program. (This was done with permission from ECU's director of institutional effectiveness.)

Here's the information the 49er Finish program requested on the survey it created:

### Demographics

This included gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, number of children and employment status.

### Reason for disenrolling from UNC Charlotte

Options included: I have decided that college is not for me; my withdrawal from UNC Charlotte is only temporary; and I am not currently enrolled at UNC Charlotte/ I have transferred or plan to transfer to another institution (select one).

### Factors contributing to your decision to withdraw from UNC Charlotte

#### A. Military duty.

#### B. Inadequate course and curriculum offerings.

Options included: inability to get courses desired/needed; decided to change major to a major not offered at UNC Charlotte; and other (please specify).

#### C. Financial issues (rank in order of importance with No. 1 being most important).

Options included: inability to pay for college; did not qualify for student financial aid; did not apply because I did not think I would qualify for student financial aid; inadequate student financial aid; inadequate scholarships for UNC Charlotte students; didn't want to accrue loan debt to pay for college; experienced unanticipated financial difficulties; and other.

#### D. Personal issues (rank in order of importance).

Options included: health issues; family issues; relationship issues; change in marital status; death of a loved one; inability to balance school with other life demands; needed a break from school; needed time to reevaluate my educational/career goals; wanted to gain practical work experience before continuing my college education; and other.

#### E. Employment issues (rank in order of importance).

Options included: lost job and could no longer afford college; school conflicted with my work schedule; accepted new employment too far away to commute to UNC Charlotte; decided to put my college education on hold after receiving a job promotion; and other.

#### F. Dissatisfaction with UNC Charlotte (rank in order of importance).

Options included: quality of instruction; quality of advising; availability of faculty/staff; opportunities to interact with faculty; opportunities to engage in research with faculty; unfriendliness of faculty; unfriendliness of staff; social activities; campus parking; campus safety; and other.

#### G. Desired a different educational experience (rank in order of importance).

Options included: a smaller institution; a larger institution; an institution closer to home; an institution farther away from home; more social activities on campus; less academic rigor; more academic rigor; more student/faculty interaction; more opportunities to work with faculty on research; more personal relationships with faculty and staff; and other.

### Method of instruction at UNC Charlotte

Options included: all of my courses at UNC Charlotte were taught face-to-face (in the classroom); all of my courses at UNC Charlotte were taught online (Web-based); and some of my courses at UNC Charlotte were taught face-to-face and some were taught online. ■

## EM officials weigh in on their top challenges

As enrollment management professionals from two generations, **Paul M. Orehovec** and **Elizabeth Orehovec** have each provided their ideas about the top issues facing enrollment managers. The father-daughter pair provides the perspective of an experienced professional compared with that of someone starting out in the field.

Paul M. Orehovec is the vice president of enrollment management and continuing and international education at the **University of Miami**. He is cofounder of UM's graduate program in enrollment management. UM offers an M.S. Ed. with concentrations in enrollment management and student life and development. You may contact him at [porehovec@miami.edu](mailto:porehovec@miami.edu).

Elizabeth Orehovec is the coordinator for budget and personnel for the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at the **University of South Carolina**. You may contact her at [orehovec@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:orehovec@gwm.sc.edu).

*By Paul M. Orehovec*

The first of these issues is impacting our daily work environment, while the other two will impact our strategic planning:

**1 Role of parents in higher education.** The hovering, "helicopter" parent is relatively new to higher education; however, elementary teachers have been experiencing this phenomenon for years.

Parents sit in on classes and argue with teachers when their children don't get straight A's. Parents want their children in honors classes, acting in plays and starting on athletic teams. These parents have been building their children's résumés for years in an effort to pave their way into the best colleges. This type of intrusive behavior doesn't change as the student starts college. Enrollment managers need to find a way to turn this challenge into an opportunity.

**2 Influence of government in assessment and outcomes.** Accountability has been a catchphrase at governmental agencies for years. Tax savvy consumers have questioned the benefits of their tax dollars going toward educational initiatives when little information is available on the outcomes of those programs. Government dollars may be contingent upon establishing clear assessment procedures, especially in enrollment related offices, from admissions to career placement and everything in between.

**3 Race to the top of *US News and World Report*.** Competition for *US News and World Report* rankings seems to be accelerating exponentially. First, faculty were questioning the ranking. Then senior administrators started developing strategic plans aimed at improving the ranking. Now trustees are assessing institutional leadership based on the ranking.

It appears that the *US News and World Report* ranking has become the "measurement" of choice. This is impacting the life of the enrollment manager in significant ways. Do we believe that the educational experiences are improved as rankings improve? ■

*By Elizabeth Orehovec*

Three critical issues have plagued enrollment managers throughout the past few years and will continue to be challenges in the coming years:

**1 Balance between improving profile and increasing diversity.** Enrollment managers face institutional pressure to increase their college's profile while enrolling a diverse student population. In recent years, colleges have faced increased pressure to attract top students to increase their profile, which leads to higher rankings in college ranking systems, such as *U.S. News and World Report*. Many universities have started to increase the amount of merit-based financial aid they award in order to attract top students.

However, colleges and universities also want to increase minority enrollment and college access to low-income students. Therefore, enrollment managers are faced with the dilemma of finding a balance between these two goals.

**2 Debate over race as an admissions factor.** Since the **University of Michigan** court cases in 2003, there is national focus on the fairness of admissions review processes and the use of affirmative action. Many colleges and universities have implemented some form of holistic review to create an equitable admissions process. However, there is still a great deal of debate regarding whether race should be a factor in the admissions process.

**3 Need for effective use of resources.** With decreased federal funding of higher education, enrollment managers must find ways to effectively use their resources to recruit, enroll and retain students. It costs a great deal of money to recruit students. If they are not being retained, the money spent on recruiting them is being wasted. Therefore, it is vital for enrollment managers to recruit students who are a fit for the institution and successfully implement programs that will help retain them. ■

## Freshmen intend to graduate; admit to weak study skills

Most college freshmen have strong aspirations to graduate with at least a four-year degree. But many also admit to poor study skills and plan to work many hours while attending college.

Those are some of the results of **Noel-Levitz's** second annual *National Freshman Attitudes Report*.

Questionnaires were completed by 97,626 students during summer orientation or their first few weeks of class at 292 two- and four-year public and private institutions.

The statement, "I have a very strong desire to continue my education, and I am quite determined to finish a degree," brought agreement from 94.6 percent of the students.

But based on the latest statistics available, less than half will complete degrees within five years, the report notes. "They have an expectation for graduation and it doesn't happen," said **Tim Culver**, vice president of Noel-Levitz.

While male students reported only slightly lower commitment toward completing degrees, female students gave much stronger ratings to their study habits and interest in reading.

In response to the statement, "I take very careful notes during class, and I review them thoroughly before a test," 69 percent of females agreed, compared with 47.4 percent of males.

Male students also reported considerably less interest in reading. Only 37.8 percent agreed with the statement, "I get a great deal of personal satisfaction from reading," compared with 53.7 percent of female students.

Male students ranked considerably ahead of female students in confidence in their math and science skills. The statement, "I have a very good grasp of the scientific ideas I've studied in school," received a positive response from 53.4 percent of male students, compared with 42.4 percent of female students.

On the positive side, many students were inter-

ested in receiving help to achieve their goals. "Students are highly motivated. They expect us to assist them from the start. And being receptive to being helped is half your battle," Culver said.

Instruction on taking college exams would be welcomed by 74.1 percent of freshmen, and 65.7 percent would like guidance in choosing an education plan to help them get a good job.

The study suggests that finances hamper many students' progress toward graduation. Overall, 27.2 percent of students expected to work more than 20 hours a week while in school. That figure was highest among students at two-year institutions, where 45.4 percent of students expected to work more than 20 hours a week.

A copy of the complete report is available at [www.noellevitz.com/freshman](http://www.noellevitz.com/freshman). ■

### Freshman expectations don't match reality

Incoming freshmen are strongly motivated to graduate, but statistics indicate that many will be disappointed, concludes **Noel-Levitz's** *National Freshman Attitudes Report*.

**94.6%** Percentage of incoming freshmen who say they are "quite determined to finish a degree."

**59.5%** Percentage of incoming freshmen who say they "take very careful notes during class" and "review them thoroughly before a test."

**46.9%** Percentage of entering college students who complete degrees within five years\*.

\*This statistic included in the Noel-Levitz report was taken from ACT, Inc.'s National Collegiate Retention and Persistence to Degree Rates study, published in 2006.

### Give help to students before they know they need it

"The one and only reason students are not retained in college is that their expectations do not match the reality," said **Tim Culver**, vice president of **Noel-Levitz**.

College officials who understand the risk factors that students face can implement intervention services and programs. Excellent freshman experience programs or courses help students understand how to succeed.

"These programs give students what they need before they know they need it or have to ask for it," Culver said. Some colleges even extend these into the sophomore year.

Early alert and intervention programs are also effective, he said.

Admissions and recruitment officials can use their knowledge of student attitudes to address issues with students before they arrive on campus.

If a student thinks she might need help with math, an official can tell her how many other students express the same concern. The official can also make sure she knows up front where to seek help if she does need it, Culver said. ■

## Employ informal performance-enhancement strategies

Formal awards programs can be powerful tools to improve your staff members' performance. But on a day-to-day basis, informal performance enhancement strategies that acknowledge they're doing a good job are far more important.

Because rewarding your staffers' good performance informally has nothing to do with promotion and pay raises, there's no added cost to your personnel budget.

A good informal performance enhancement strategy should be based on these simple principles:

1. **Job knowledge.** You know what your staff members are doing and what they should be doing.
2. **Communication.** They know that you know.
3. **Specific recognition.** You single out specific achievements for recognition.
4. **Recognition of all improvements, no matter how slight.** If staffers are having trouble, or are new to their jobs or to specific tasks, you can give out one-on-one recognition for those bits of their performance that are acceptable, or that approach acceptable.

Then, as performance improves, you can raise the bar. All improvements should be recognized, even if the baseline is low.

5. **Clear goals.** Find ways to chart individual and unit goals, so your staff members know exactly how they are doing as individuals and as a group, and what

they have to do to reach or exceed their objectives.

Again, no matter how poor the start, every improvement should be recognized. Positive reinforcement always works better than negative reinforcement.

**6. Formal awards.** Plug your informal program into the formal awards programs by reflecting superior performance in detailed appraisals, and by nominating your best (and only your best) performers for formal awards.

### Tread lightly to avoid complaints of favoritism

While it's important to show your staff members how performance enhancement can lead to career growth, it is also easy to make mistakes here.

Don't make promises — or what your staff members may think are promises — about promotions or pay increases that may not happen.

And be careful about rewarding your best staffers with career-enhancing training and duty opportunities.

Be sure you are prepared to justify this sort of favoritism, or you may have a nasty discrimination complaint on your hands from a staff member who feels left out. ■

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## Boost access, success with comprehensive learning plan

WASHINGTON — Every aid officer knows there's not enough money to go around. This is particularly true at community colleges where large numbers of part-time students don't qualify for federal and state aid programs. But there are things you can do to help these students succeed.

Florida's **Valencia Community College** uses many programs, including scholarships, to hike access and success for students from low-income families and underrepresented groups. For many years, VCC has had the most community college graduates in the United States, as reported by *Community College Weekly*.

Review VCC's innovative strategies for ideas you could use on your campus.

In 2000, Valencia was named one of 12 international Vanguard Learning Colleges by the **League for Innovation in the Community College**. As part of the institution's work in this arena, officials created a strategic learning plan, said **Ann Puyana**, VCC's assistant vice president for academic affairs. The plan focuses on student outcomes. Three of the goals are learning first, start right, and diversity works. "This has been an ongoing process," Puyana explained. She spoke at an **Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance** hearing.

The initiative's main strategies are:

- Development of systems that provide students with connection and direction.
- Creation of programs to close success gaps.
- Use of articulation strategies to ease transfer.

A collaborative student and academic affairs team invented LifeMap, which links all of VCC's compo-

### Valencia uses creative aid programs

Florida's **Valencia Community College** uses several creative methods to increase access for disadvantaged students. They include:

- **Community workshops.** Student aid officers appear at high schools, community centers and churches.
- **Scholarship programs.** VCC offers many targeted scholarships, including two-year tuition grants to help ease the college transition of at-risk high school graduates. Scholarships are provided to students who successfully complete Valencia's summer Bridges program of courses, workshops and support services.
- **Fast track to enrollment.** VCC provides a speedy enrollment program for new students from underrepresented ethnic groups. Students complete all steps from orientation to course selection in a one-day, summer event. They leave with a fall schedule. ■

nents — faculty, staff, courses, technology, programs and services — into a guide. LifeMap features a Web site with links to related sites, as well as a 182-page, comprehensive, step-by-step student handbook.

Outreach is another big element, so the student aid office uses several creative strategies to assist disadvantaged students (see box above).

VCC is using a four-year **Lumina Foundation** Achieving the Dream grant and college funding to scale up programs proven to enhance success.

Partnerships with K-12 schools, community colleges and four-year colleges are also important, Puyana said. Articulation agreements and statewide programs such as common course numbering and data sharing have helped boost progression rates.

Contact Ann Puyana at APuyana@valenciacc.edu. ■

### Learning plan focuses on helping students map out their dreams

Florida's **Valencia Community College** created a strategic learning plan to help students succeed. Two key parts of the multiyear, campuswide initiative are:

**1 LifeMap.** This is an online guide on what to do and when to complete career and education goals. It links all VCC components into a personal itinerary. Parts include:

- **LifeMap Tools.** This includes links to career, education and financial planning sites.
- **LifeMap Stages.** This has links to sites on how to progress through programs and services for stages such as postsecondary transition and progression to degree.
- **LifeMap Resources.** This features links to resources such as financial aid, tutoring centers, and a comprehen-

sive, 186-page step-by-step student handbook.

**2 Achieving the Dream.** VCC uses this grant to close student success gaps. Programs include:

- **Supplemental instruction.** Valencia features in-class peer tutoring to help students overcome roadblock courses such as developmental math.
- **Expansion of Student Life Skills course.** This three-credit class teaches about life success strategies and study skills.
- **Learning in Community.** This matches two team-taught courses which include integrated learning activities.
- **Community building.** Valencia solicits and acts on feedback from the local community. ■

## AT A GLANCE

A REVIEW OF THIS MONTH'S  
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**Financial Aid**

- Student loans cannot be discharged if a debtor has not made a good-faith effort to repay them.....10

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- The First Amendment does not protect public employees' official statements.....11

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## DISABILITIES

**University adds appeals process to enrollment VP's decisions**

**Case name:** *Letter re: Lincoln Memorial University*, No. 04-06-2010 (106 LRP 35394) (OCR 2006).

**Ruling:** A student alleged that **Lincoln Memorial University** discriminated against her on the basis of her disability. The **Office for Civil Rights** determined that the university voluntarily provided amended grievance procedures that resolved the deficiency identified in the student's allegation.

**What it means:** Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, an effective university grievance procedure should provide a way for students to file complaints regarding all types of disability discrimination. The procedure should incorporate appropriate due process standards and should provide for the prompt, equitable resolution of disability discrimination complaints.

**Summary:** Because the university voluntarily amended its grievance procedures, OCR concluded that the student's allegation had been resolved.

The student stated that during the spring 2005 semester, she called both the university's vice president and president to determine the procedure for filing a grievance concerning the accommodations she had been denied by the vice president for enrollment. She stated that both the vice president and president referred her back to the VP for enrollment. Since her grievance concerned the VP for enrollment's failure to provide accommodations listed on her

evaluation, the student did not file a grievance.

The university's grievance procedure for disability complaints was published in the student handbook and was available on the university's Web site. The grievance policy for students with disabilities stated that students should contact the VP for enrollment for assistance regarding problems with accommodations. OCR noted, however, that there was no level of review once the VP for enrollment had made a determination.

On March 28, 2006, the university voluntarily amended its grievance procedure to provide for three levels of review. The amended grievance procedure requires the VP for enrollment to investigate and to provide a determination of written concerns within 10 business days.

If a student is dissatisfied with the decision, she may request a hearing within five business days before the university grievance committee, which consists of the assistant VP for enrollment, the director of student success and retention, the director of student support services, and the academic dean or chair of the department the affected student is enrolled in.

If the student is dissatisfied with the committee decision, the student has the right to appeal to the university president who will make the final determination within five business days.

OCR found the university had taken actions to resolve the complaint allegation by amending its procedures to include three levels of review. ■

## FINANCIAL AID

**Court cancels discharge of student loans on rehearing**

**Case name:** *Mason v. Educational Credit Management Corp.*, No. 03-00147 (106 LRP 67430) (Bankr. D. Idaho 2006).

**Ruling:** When the **9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals** sent the case back, the bankruptcy court voided its earlier ruling and held that the debtor's student loans were not discharged.

**What it means:** If a debtor does not make a good-faith effort to repay his loans, they should not be discharged.

**Summary:** In 2004, the bankruptcy court granted a partial discharge of the debtor's student loans. That ruling was reversed earlier this year by the 9th Circuit because it found that he had not made a good faith effort to repay his loans.

When it received the case back, the bankruptcy court ruled that the debtor's loans were excepted from discharge based on the 9th Circuit's ruling. ■

## FIRST AMENDMENT

## Financial aid counselor's First Amendment claim falls short

**Case name:** *Battle v. Ga. Bd. of Regents*, No. 05-11187 (106 LRP 64438) (11th Cir. 2006).

**Ruling:** The **11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals** upheld the District Court's dismissal of **Lillie Battle's** First Amendment retaliation claim against the **Georgia Board of Regents**.

**What it means:** When public employees make statements pursuant to their official duties, the employees are not speaking as citizens for First Amendment purposes. Accordingly, the U.S. Constitution does not insulate their communications from employer discipline.

**Summary:** Battle worked in the Office of Financial Aid and Veterans Affairs at **Fort Valley State University** from 1987 to 1998. During the spring of 1995, Battle began to document what she believed were fraudulent practices in the Federal Work Study Program.

In January 1996, Battle's position changed to financial aid counselor. As part of her employment duties, she was required to verify the completion and accuracy of student files as well as report any perceived fraudulent activity.

In examining some files previously handled by her supervisor, OFA Director **Jeanette Huff**, Battle discovered "improprieties" pointing to what she believed was

"Huff's fraudulent mishandling and mismanagement of Federal financial aid funds." Battle confronted Huff about those improprieties, but Huff made no corrections. Battle then complained to FVSU's president, but he took no remedial steps.

On May 25, 1998, Battle received a letter indicating the contract for her position as financial aid counselor would not be renewed. She filed an internal appeal, claiming her contract was not renewed because of her attempts to expose Huff's fraud. A grievance committee upheld the decision not to renew.

In June 2004, Battle filed suit in the district court. She alleged she was discharged, in violation of the First Amendment, for reporting her concerns about fraud. The District Court found for FVSU, and Battle appealed.

The 11th Circuit found that Battle's speech to FVSU officials about inaccuracies and signs of fraud in student files was made in accordance with her official employment responsibilities.

"Because the First Amendment protects speech on matters of public concern made by a government employee speaking as a citizen, not as an employee fulfilling official responsibilities, [Battle's] retaliation claim must fail," the court stated. ■

## DISMISSAL

## Student's low GPA — not age, gender or race — led to dismissal

**Case name:** *Letter to: Southern Illinois University*, No. 05-05-2108 (106 LRP 35396) (OCR 2005).

**Ruling:** The **Office for Civil Rights** determined there was insufficient evidence to support a student's allegation that the **University of Southern Illinois-Edwardsville** discriminated against him on the basis of age, gender and race.

**What it means:** Universities are under an obligation to ensure that their programs do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, or any other protected status.

**Summary:** The student was a 50-year-old, white male. He entered the master's level program in Educational Administration in the summer of 2004.

The student asserted that he was dismissed from the program because of his age, gender and race.

During the course of its investigation, OCR reviewed documents submitted by the student and the university. It also conducted interviews with the student and university faculty and personnel.

OCR's investigation revealed that the university identified the student for dismissal because of his

low grade point average. The program faculty and instructors who participated in the decision to dismiss the student uniformly stated that he showed an extensive pattern of not completing and turning in his course work in a timely manner.

Additionally, the evidence did not support the student's view that his conversations with the program director and one of his professors indicated their bias towards him on the basis of age and race, respectively.

He also failed to provide any information concerning direct remarks or evidence of discrimination with respect to gender. Further, the evidence did not support his belief that older white males like him were the only students dismissed from the program in the last few years.

Based on the evidence, OCR determined the student was not treated differently on the basis of his age, race or gender. It found he was dismissed from the program in accordance with the university's established criteria and process because of his poor academic performance. ■

JIM MARAVIGLIA, ASST. VP, ADMISSIONS, RECRUITMENT AND FINANCIAL AID, CAL POLY

## Shared vision and staff responsibilities bring innovation

"I can get people engaged with ideas and running with them," said **Jim Maraviglia**, assistant vice president, admissions, recruitment and financial aid at **California State Polytechnic University – San Luis Obispo**. That's the accomplishment he's most proud of since starting his college admissions career in 1975.



JIM MARAVIGLIA

The key to running his operation well has been identifying key staff members, empowering them, and "not getting in their way," Maraviglia said.

Giving others responsibility is a challenge to many managers, he said. A common mistake they make is saying, "Let's have a meeting." Letting staff members come

up with ideas and take action on them is much more effective, Maraviglia said.

Maraviglia's approach has led to many innovations. He and his staff developed the first electronic college application in 1991. Students typed their information onto disks provided by Cal Poly and mailed them in.

**Xap Corp.** produced the application, and the possibilities it raised led to the creation of the **California State**

### Take time to build trust and buy-in

Admissions efforts at **California State Polytechnic University – San Luis Obispo** include staff and faculty across the campus. Students apply by intended major, and the departments participate in admissions decisions.

Messages from department chairs are part of the communications with prospective, admitted and newly-enrolled students. But gaining trust and buy-in across campus was not immediate. "We've done a lot to build that trust and respect," said **Jim Maraviglia**, assistant vice president, admissions, recruitment and financial aid.

Maraviglia developed those relationships by setting goals and working toward them. He started with a SWOT analysis of his division. Managers use this business tool to determine strengths and weaknesses within their organization and opportunities and threats outside it.

Maraviglia updates his strategic plan each year and carefully tracks progress toward goals. Campuswide support has grown as others see the results he documents. ■

### Building relationships central to effective recruitment

The methods that colleges use to recruit students have changed dramatically since **Jim Maraviglia** began working in admissions in 1975. Maraviglia is the assistant vice president, admissions, recruitment and financial aid at **California State Polytechnic University – San Luis Obispo**.

The goals have not changed, however. "It's still about building relationships," Maraviglia said.

Recruiting methods have evolved along with changes in how students want those relationships built. Cal Poly moved to electronic communications after prospective students said, "Hey, we're not going to open your mail."

Cal Poly's communications with students are all electronic and customized, including VIP pages, e-mails with flash animation and a digital viewbook.

As student preferences continue to change, so will recruiting methods. Social networking sites, cell phones, and iPods® are creating new communications possibilities, Maraviglia said. ■

**University** system Web portal, [www.csumentor.org](http://www.csumentor.org). It was the first collaborative portal to distribute information and enable applications and other functions through the Web. There are now about 30 such portals, many of them statewide efforts.

Cal Poly's use of electronic communications in the recruitment and admissions process has become a model for institutions around the country. It has hosted representatives from about 50 institutions who want to learn more. Maraviglia has visited about 20 others as a private consultant.

Nationwide survey results show that Cal Poly's students are 12 times as satisfied with the institution's recruitment methods compared to students at peer institutions. More than 60 percent of them indicated they would not have applied to or attended Cal Poly if not for its e-marketing efforts.

Cal Poly's accomplishments in electronic communications are possible in part because of the creation of **Hobsons'** EMT Connect. This product was developed after Maraviglia explained to a visiting Hobsons representative what he needed.

A few days later, a team from Hobsons' parent company flew in from London to discuss the idea. The initial design plans for the software were first drawn on a napkin in a local bar later that day.

Contact **Jim Maraviglia** at [tjmaravig@calpoly.edu](mailto:tjmaravig@calpoly.edu). ■