Higher Education
News Clippings

Week of December 7, 2003
Governor Visits West Liberty

By ANDY STAMP

WEST LIBERTY - Gov. Bob Wise took time out of his schedule Wednesday to sit down with faculty and students at West Liberty State College and discuss education issues.

Flexibility for institutions of higher education was the theme of much of the discussion during Wise's visit to West Liberty. Following a tour of the campus with college President Richard Owens, Wise sat down for 20 minutes to listen to faculty and students express their views.

"Each institution will need to be freed up to find their particular niche," Wise said, after acknowledging that there were "great changes" occurring in higher education across the country. "This gives me a chance to understand where that unique spot is for West Liberty."

Ann Rose, president of the Faculty Senate, said she was pleased that Wise was looking into increasing the autonomy of campuses across the Mountain State.

"Anything you can do to help us move in the direction of flexibility would be welcome," Rose said. She prefaced the request by saying, "Money is tight. We understand that's tight all over the country."

Wise agreed that money was tight, but said he was optimistic. He added that he believes higher education has the "seeds of its own success."

Wise said he was encouraged to see that enrollment in West Virginia higher education had increased at a time when the state's population had decreased.

Wise encouraged the gathered faculty and staff to e-mail him should they have thoughts about where flexibility could be extended.

"I'm looking for some suggestions," he said.

Wise said he would submit a first draft of the state budget in two to three weeks, but said this would allow him time to make revisions. "Ideas are always welcome," he added.
Owens asked the faculty and students to tell Wise "what is so special and unique about West Liberty that brought you here and keeps you here."

Marcia Hoover, assistant professor of education and coordinator of Instructional Technology and Distance Education, said the hard-working, ambitious students are what attracted her to the college. She said the college really focuses on the students, and she appreciates the institution’s push to integrate technology.

Robert McDonald, assistant professor of business and chairman of the Department of Administrative Systems, said he was attracted to the college because of the faculty and students. "I love my job," he said.

Lena Kalvans, a freshman nursing major from St. Petersburg, Russia, said she was attracted to the college’s small teacher-to-student ratio, which matched her experience at Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy. She said her teachers are always there to help.

"I was just astounded," said Amanda Schmid, a senior biology major from Wheeling, regarding her visit to the school. Schmid transferred from another school where she was not satisfied, but was reluctant to look at WLSC. "People in town called it the high school on the hill."

But Schmid refutes that reputation and said she found the professionalism of the faculty was "just amazing."

"We're one of the best kept secrets in the state," said Mark Williams, associate professor of music and chairman of the Department of Arts and Communications. "What we're doing in media arts will rival any other school in the state." Because of its small size but great ambition, Williams views WLSC as "the little college that could."

Robert Kreisberg, associate professor of biology and chairman of Natural Science and Mathematics, said he felt that the public college gave a "private school education at a public school cost." Kreisberg said the college's administration does not hassle him, but allows him to apply for grants and "spread his wings."

Owens closed the meeting by presenting Wise with a packet of information that included the college's technology master plan. He also gave Wise a "memento" of the visit: a gray WLSC collared shirt.

Prior to the session, Wise toured the campus with Owens as his guide. In College Hall, Owens showed Wise the auditorium, which seats 454 persons. Owens said the college is hoping to build a connector from College Hall to the neighboring Hall of Fine Arts.
Many FS courses offered on Web
Fairmont State becoming leader in online learning, distance education

Dec. 4, 2003
By Kelly Barth

It may never completely replace the conventional college classroom, but the Web is becoming an increasingly common place to take a Fairmont State course. Signs indicate Fairmont State is becoming a leader in distance education and online learning.

More than 30 courses are being offered online now and 25 instructors are teaching the courses. The number of courses and the number of students enrolled in online learning has continued to grow each semester since the program started at Fairmont State in March 2000.

WebCT, which stands for Web Course Tools, is the online course delivery system Fairmont State has been using. Students “e-learn,” communicating through bulletin boards, chat rooms and e-mail. They access course material and check their own grades online. Instructors track enrollment and attendance, post assignments and update courses in the same fashion.

“Because WebCT allows students to take a class any place at any time, non-traditional students and those seeking recertification for employment benefit the most,” Roxann Humbert, Fairmont State’s learning technologies director, said.

The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission chose Fairmont State, along with West Virginia University and Marshall University, as the three state institutions that will host a WebCT Vista server to serve all 16 of the state’s colleges and universities. The WebCT Vista online course delivery system will centralize information-technology support and administration and allow institutions to share courses and offer joint degrees.

“Improving student access to higher education is one of the institution’s main goals,” Fairmont State President Dr. Dan Bradley said.

This spring, Fairmont State will be offering 38 undergraduate courses and three graduate courses online. Enrollment in the courses has increased from 323 students in fall 2002 to 530 this fall. Enrollment in the online courses is expected to jump to 800 students this spring.

Humbert said the retention rate for WebCT courses at Fairmont State is 80 percent. The college is in the process of receiving approval to offer a two-year, general studies degree online. A school library media specialist teaching-certification enhancement program is currently being offered online, along with a minor in library science.

Humbert and Dr. Valerie Morphew, associate professor of education, said basic computer skills are adequate in order for a student to take a course online. But students lacking certain study skills may not do so well online. Students need to be self-
motivated, independent learners, have good time management and written
communication skills, and be willing to take initiative and become actively involved in
the learning process.
“It takes discipline,” Morphew said.
A student who lives in North Carolina is enrolled in Morphew’s human growth and
development class.
“It’s been really interesting because she’s in the school system already and she reports
on her school experiences there and shares through the discussion board and the chats
what’s going on in North Carolina,” Morphew said.
Richard Barnard is enrolled in the master of arts in education program being offered at
Fairmont State in collaboration with Marshall University. A non-traditional, full-time
student, Barnard’s career background is in banking and information services.
He’s currently taking his entire semester course load — five classes — through WebCT.
His goal is to become certified to teach business and computer science.
“I think the perception with online classes is that they are self-paced and you are on
your own, and that’s not what I’ve found here at all,” Barnard said. “In fact, they are not
self-paced. The classes are led by an instructor who guides your learning. However,
they do it electronically rather than face to face in the classroom.
“I’ve found that every student will participate when it’s writing, i.e. e-mailing back and
forth. You don’t just learn by what you do on your own. You learn through the
experiences of other people.”
Humbert said online courses foster lifelong learning. Barnard said the courses are
offering another option to an increasingly multi-faceted student population.
“All of us in the education arena have different things we want to learn — and different
demands on our time,” he said.
Colleges, universities search for alternatives to budget cuts

December 05, 2003

CHARLESTON (AP) - Gov. Bob Wise told the state's college and university presidents on Thursday to prepare for an across-the-board midyear reduction of up to 2.7 percent, or $9.3 million.

Wise administration officials say lagging tax collections mean the state must reduce overall spending by between 2.5 and 3 percent to avoid a $20 million shortfall by the end of the fiscal year.

"I cannot stop an economic tide," Wise said. "We are not immune from the national economy."

Wise said he will make a final decision on the reduction within the next few days.

That came as more bad news to the college and university administrators, who along with the Higher Education Policy Commission have been lobbying Wise to find alternatives to budget cuts of as much as $34 million next year. This year's state spending on higher education totals $343 million.

"It's going to take a while for this to sink in," said Jerry Beasley, president of Concord College. "The governor has a tough challenge."

West Virginia University President David Hardesty, Marshall University President Dan Angel and others have pleaded with Wise to not only restore the $34 million, but increase spending by another $24 million.

But with a $120 million hole to fill in the 2005 fiscal budget, either the budget has to be cut, taxes must rise or leaders must find alternatives.

Marshall and WVU, along with other state agencies, had to slash their budgets by 10 percent this fiscal year. Wise wants another 9 percent reduction for next fiscal year.

Possibilities raised during Wise's meeting with a committee of presidents working on alternatives to an across-the-board cut include hiring more tax auditors to recoup additional taxes or raising state fees and taxes on soda pop or cigarettes.

Other possibilities include a one-time tax amnesty, which hasn't been done for more than a decade and would require Legislative approval, or giving the schools more flexibility to administer themselves.
Wise asked the administrators to put suggestions in a package and submit it to him.

Wise said he misses his days as a congressman during budget times since the federal government has the option of working in a deficit.

"I don't have that option here," Wise said. "We don't have a choice. We have to adapt."

Wise reminded the presidents that in his three years as governor, financial aid has increased to $60 million, a jump of $45 million. Much of that is in the form of merit-based help through the PROMISE scholarship, but it also includes increases in the need-based programs for regular and part-time students.

The Higher Education Policy Commission has its monthly meeting Friday, where the spending cuts will likely be discussed again.

William F. Massy, author of "Honoring the Trust: Quality and Cost Containment in Higher Education," told higher education leaders before the governor's address Thursday that there are ways to cut costs while maintaining quality.

He said creativity and flexibility should be emphasized, and that changes should be "bottom up," with input from faculty, rather than "top down" directives from administrators and state officials.

Since 1996, state funding for higher education has dropped 8.5 percent, and administrators say they are operating on bare-bones budgets.
Colleges seek to be universities
West Virginia State among schools seeking approval

By The Associated Press
Friday December 05, 2003

Four West Virginia public colleges are seeking permission from the Higher Education Policy Commission to take the first step toward becoming universities.

Concord College, Fairmont State College, Shepherd College and West Virginia State College have asked the commission to grant them university status.

The issue was expected to be discussed at today's commission meeting.

Historically black West Virginia State is the only land-grant institution in the country that is not a university. Yet the college in Institute is bigger than 343 universities nationwide. West Virginia University and Marshall University are the only public universities in the state.

Obtaining university status does not give the colleges permission to change their names. Such a change requires legislative approval and a change in state code.

The presidents of the four institutions say university status would more accurately reflect their academic offerings, give them more prestige, help recruit students and faculty and attract alternative funding.

Last year the policy commission approved criteria for obtaining university status after West Virginia State College asked that it be allowed to add university to its name to take advantage of its land-grant status to attract more federal grants.

To qualify for university status, colleges must:

Offer at least one master's level degree program, and for all such programs get approval of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association.

Have an approved mission statement which provides for the offering of graduate programs.

Have a faculty, excluding community and technical college teachers, in which at least two-thirds of tenured and tenured-track professors hold the highest degree possible in their field, typically a doctorate.
Wise names former chief of staff to higher ed post

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) -- Gov. Bob Wise has named his former chief of staff, Mike Garrison, to the state Higher Education Policy Commission.

Garrison began the Wise administration as secretary of tax and revenue and later became chief of staff. Since he left Wise's office in September to work as a lawyer for the firm Spilman Thomas & Battle, he has been criticized for lobbying Wise administration officials he recently worked with for a Mettiki Coal permit.

Garrison is a Marion County native and a former student body president at West Virginia University.

Wise made the appointment Thursday.
Four colleges clear hurdle in quest for university status

By The Associated Press
Saturday December 06, 2003

West Virginia State College has taken a major step toward becoming a university.

The Higher Education Policy Commission voted 5-0 without comment Friday to grant university status to Concord College, Fairmont State College, Shepherd College and West Virginia State College.

However, legislative approval is required before the colleges can change their names. The colleges can submit their proposed name changes to the Legislature during its regular session that begins in January.

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"I see the decision today as the policy commission promoting the idea that West Virginians should have an increase in opportunities for graduate degrees. I think it's a very positive step," said West Virginia State President Hazo Carter.

Carter said a bill will likely be presented in January requesting a name change for West Virginia State.

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Have an approved mission statement which provides for the offering of graduate programs.
Have a faculty, excluding community and technical college teachers, in which at least two-thirds of tenured and tenured-track professors hold the highest degree possible in their field, typically a doctorate. Since last year all four colleges have started at least one graduate program, got authorization from North Central Association to offer limited master's degrees and met other criteria, Bruce Flack, the commission's director of academic affairs, said in a report to the commission.

"Achieving the designation of university status does not alter the funding base or allocation levels for any of the institutions nor does it constitute an approval for a college to take the name university," Flack said in his report.
Higher education gets smaller trim
W.Va. State, 3 others get nod to become universities

By Tara Tuckwiller
STAFF WRITER

West Virginia college presidents clapped, cheered and heaved sighs of relief Friday when Chancellor J. Michael Mullen told them they’re losing another $4.8 million of their already slashed budgets.

They feared they’d lose $9 million.

Meanwhile, four state colleges — Concord, Fairmont State, Shepherd and West Virginia State — moved one step closer to becoming universities.

Mullen called the shrunken budget cut “a good present” at Friday’s meeting of the Higher Education Policy Commission.

Last month, Gov. Bob Wise said this year’s state budget was headed for a $20 million hole. He proposed a 2.6 percent cut for almost every state agency to stave it off.

That would have shaved $9 million off this year’s state college budget, which was already down $37 million from the year before.

Then in August, Wise told colleges he wanted them to chop another $34 million off their budget for next year.

“We would have lost about one-fourth of our funds in a 2 1/2-year period,” Marshall University President Dan Angel told a legislative committee in September.

Next year’s budget is still up in the air. In September, Angel and West Virginia University President David Hardesty launched a campaign against the higher-ed cut. In October, WVU’s student government created an organization to protest the cut. Senate Education Chairman Robert Plymale, D-Wayne, said legislators will fight Wise on the higher ed cut.

As for the midyear cut, “Instead of losing $1.62 million ... Marshall will lose $872,000,” Angel said Friday.

“We appreciate the governor modifying this amount.”
Also on Friday:

Commissioners granted university status to Concord, Fairmont State, Shepherd and West Virginia state colleges. Before they can change their names, the colleges must get approval from the Legislature.

Students entering West Virginia colleges starting in fall 2006 will have to take a 30-minute writing exam as part of their ACT college entrance test, commissioners decided.

A new private college got preliminary approval to operate in Jefferson County. The University of Fairfax plans to offer master’s and doctoral degrees in information systems.

“This [degree] is something that’s very rarely available,” Mullen said. “This would be one of the few places to offer this.”

Commissioners approved Glenville State College’s new president, Robert Freeman, at a salary of $135,000.
High school seniors in West Virginia who completed standardized testing and fell short of the new PROMISE Scholarship requirements will have a chance to improve test scores again in February.

The ACT board recently announced its next national test date for the ACT Assessment is Feb. 7, with a registration deadline of Jan. 2, and while test scores for PROMISE hopefuls will be accepted through ACT’s June testing date, those wanting to improve their scores are encouraged to start now. "Waiting for the last minute is not what you want to do," said Marylin Wehrheim, guidance counselor at John Marshall High School in Glen Dale, explaining the longer students wait to take the test, the less chances they have to improve.

In an effort to control costs and increase retention of the scholarship, the independent PROMISE board voted Oct. 7 to increase requirements on the ACT and SAT college entrance exams to mandate a minimum score in each area of testing, rather than the previous minimum composite score only. While students must still earn a composite of 21 on the ACT, the change requires these students to now earn at least a 19 in each of the ACT subjects, which include English, reading, math and science.

The change affected several hundred students across the state, but seniors were provided additional opportunities to improve their scores with an extension on the date to file test scores.

"What we've done is extend the test filing date to June. That gives seniors two extra test dates to try get their scores up," said PROMISE Director Robert Morgenstern, who received complaints from area parents upset by the late change because they believed it came about too late for current seniors to pursue remedial courses to strengthen testing weaknesses.

According to Wehrheim, however, there are a number of resources available to help seniors prepare.

"We have countless things to help students prepare for these tests," she said. "I'm a firm believer that the best preparation is going through the books and packets that ACT provides, but it's something you don't want to wait and do the night before."

Resources available through ACT include sample and retired tests and ACTive Prep, a two-disc electronic practice program that provides users with virtual "study buddies," practice tests and preparation guides.
"There is so much available to students. Here at John Marshall we provide the ACTive Prep, which students are allowed to check out like a library book and take home for practice. We also take all of our seniors to our Success Lab, where they can go and practice with (ACTive Prep) on a daily basis if they want to," Wehrheim said.

"Peterson's Guide" for standardizing testing was another of Wehrheim's recommendations, but she said one resource often overlooked by students is their teachers.

"Students can also use their teachers as resources. If they're taking practice tests and find they're having trouble in certain areas, teachers are there for English, math and science questions or whatever their having trouble with," she said.

PROMISE Scholarship aside, Wehrheim said all students planning to apply to colleges for next fall need to be aware of deadlines set by their prospective schools.

"We suggest students take it (ACT) by February," she said.

For those students looking at higher education in the future, she said it's never too early to start planning. Taking standardized tests throughout high school can improve scores and help relieve testing anxiety. According to ACT, more than 55 percent of students who took the ACT assessment more than once improved scores on the retest.

"Practice is always the best preparation," said Wehrheim. "Students also need to challenge themselves throughout high school. ... If they take the minimum level courses and just enough to get by, they aren't going to be as well prepared for testing as someone who took the higher level and more challenging classes."
Wise orders spending cuts
Schools, WVSP, children's health, prisons, Medicaid, tax agency exempt

By Phil Kabler
STAFF WRITER

As expected, Gov. Bob Wise imposed a mid-year spending cut to deal with a projected $20 million shortfall in tax collections for the 2003-04 budget.

Most agencies will have to cut spending for the remaining seven months of the budget year by 2.9 percent.

Wise exempted several agencies from the cut, including public education, the Children's Health Insurance Program, the Division of Corrections, Medicaid, the State Police and the Tax Division.

He imposed a smaller cut of 1.4 percent on state colleges and universities.

Roger Smith, director of the budget section for the state Finance Division, said he believes state government will be able to absorb the reduction without serious cutbacks.

“We’re looking at a reduction of about seven-tenths of 1 percent out of a $3 billion budget,” he said.

Smith said he believes most departments will be able to make adjustments without resorting to layoffs or unpaid employee furloughs.

“You may have some agencies not filling vacancies,” he said.

He said the budget office will be meeting with department heads next week to review options for spending cuts.

Barring the exemptions, each department will be required to cut overall spending by 2.9 percent, but department secretaries will have the prerogative to impose sharper cuts on some agencies, and smaller or no reductions on other agencies.

“If one agency can give up more than another agency, it's up to the secretary to make that determination,” he said.
Wise had said earlier this week he intended to make a decision on the mid-year cuts before the Christmas holidays.

Despite some encouraging numbers in the November tax collections, Wise said it is preferable to impose a cut now, with the hopes of being able to rescind it later in the budget year if the economy continues to recover.

Mark Muchow, chief administrator for revenue operations for the state Tax Department, agreed with the decision.

“In case something falls loose that we hadn’t counted on, it’s better to do it sooner than later,” he said.

Smith said mid-year spending adjustments are not unusual, and noted that the current state budget is based on projections that were finalized in December 2002.
College students could be charged per credit
Full-timers would pay more under proposed program

By Scott Finn
STAFF WRITER

Some part-time college students could pay less for tuition — and full-time students could pay more — under a pilot program being proposed by the state Higher Education Policy Commission.

The proposal would allow three state colleges or universities to charge students for every credit hour they take, Chancellor J. Michael Mullen told legislators Sunday.

Right now, full-time students are charged for 12 credit hours, even if they’re taking more credits. Students must take about 15 hours per semester to receive a bachelor’s degree within four years.

Charging for those hours over 15 would generate money for those three schools. Mullen said he expects legislators to require that money be used to lower the cost of each credit hour, making the plan revenue-neutral.

The proposed legislation would allow any three institutions to ask the Higher Education Policy Commission for permission to charge by the new system. Mullen said Fairmont State and Northern West Virginia Community and Technical College have expressed interest in the pilot.

Mullen said the pilot project could start as soon as next fall, but probably wouldn’t begin until a year later.

In 2008, the Policy Commission would report to the Legislature the results of the pilot program and recommend whether the program should expand to other schools.

Also Sunday, Promise scholarship Executive Director Robert Morgenstern released a report detailing how many students would have been turned down for scholarships this year, if tougher new requirements approved this fall had been in place.

To earn the scholarship, students still must earn a composite score of 21 on the ACT, but they now must earn a minimum score of 19 in each subject area — reading, math, science and English. The minimum score will rise to 20 on July 1 for students who are now high school juniors.
About one of every four students who won a Promise scholarship this year would have been turned down if those standards were in effect.

In Kanawha County, 108 of 504 students would not have received the scholarship — 21 percent, which is slightly better than the state average.

In Putnam County, 44 of 178 students, or 25 percent, would have been denied.

The percentage of students that would have been denied the scholarships varied from school to school in Kanawha and Putnam County.

Nearly half of the Promise recipients at Riverside High School, for example, would not have received scholarships under the new requirements. At Sissonville, only 10 percent of Promise winners would have missed out under the new rules.

Other schools in Kanawha and Putnam counties and the percentage of students that would have missed out on Promise include: Herbert Hoover, 30; Buffalo, 29; South Charleston, 25; Hurricane, 24; Winfield, 23; Nitro, 22; Capital, 21; Poca, 19; St. Albans, 18; Teays Christian, 17; George Washington, 15; and Charleston Catholic, 3.

The counties that would have lost 30 percent or more of their scholarship winners were: Morgan, 55 percent; Calhoun, 41 percent; Hampshire, 40 percent; Lincoln, 39 percent; Summers, 38 percent; Mason, 35 percent; Mingo and Pocahontas, 33 percent; Grant and Tucker, 32 percent; McDowell and Preston, 31 percent; and Nicholas, 30 percent.
West Virginia's college and universities are attracting more than three times the number of out-of-state students than the in-state graduates who leave, the Higher Education Policy Commission says.

It's an area the state could capitalize on even more if the Legislature adopted a policy directing schools to more aggressively recruit out-of-state seniors, Higher Education Chancellor Michael Mullens said.

In the fall of 2002, 3,227 out-of-state students enrolled at West Virginia's public, four-year colleges and universities. That's compared to 462 West Virginia graduates who enrolled in public schools outside of the state, according to a federal survey conducted every two years.

At private schools, 1,001 out-of-state students enrolled in West Virginia schools, compared to the 807 state students who left for private campuses.

That means four-year college and universities in West Virginia had 4,238 out-of-state students enroll last fall, while only 1,269 state high school graduates left.

Mullens said the migration figures paint a picture that's "contrary to the common wisdom" that West Virginia is losing its brightest minds to neighboring states.

"It's just not true," he said.

Mullens told an Education committee at Sunday's interim session that schools should be more aggressive in recruiting out-of-state students. He said out-of-state students are financially lucrative: They often pay full tuition, while in-state students pay much less.

The Legislature should consider adopting a policy that allows schools to increase their out-of-state students as long as they don't do it at the expense of West Virginia graduates, Mullens said.

West Virginia is attracting more students from surrounding states than it loses.

The ratio of students gained compared to the number lost was 854-605 for West Virginia and Ohio; 617-242 for West Virginia and Maryland; 1,154-516 for West Virginia and Pennsylvania; and 645-320 for West Virginia and Virginia.
The only state that saw a significant gain from West Virginia graduates was Kentucky, which attracted 199 West Virginia graduates compared to the 134 who came to West Virginia.

In other education-related matters at Sunday's interim legislative session:

Midyear budget cuts ordered by Gov. Bob Wise last week forced West Virginia University to cut $2.2 million and Marshall University to slice $870,000. Overall, higher education had to reduce spending by $4.8 million to reach the 1.4 percent cut.

However, it wasn't all bad news. Most state agencies had their budgets reduced by 2.9 percent to correct the $20 million revenue shortfall.

"Everybody wished it was zero, but 1.4 percent instead of 2.9 percent is a pretty significant statement," Mullens said.

This fall, there are 66,993 full-time equivalent students enrolled at West Virginia's public colleges and universities, according to the policy commission. That's an increase of more than 2,000 students, or 3.1 percent.
WVU has 22,647 full-time equivalent students, up from 21,588 last year. Marshall has 12,498, a slight increase from 12,328 a year ago.

Mullens is floating a proposal that would shift some of the cost for taking classes from part-time students to full-time students. Currently, full-time students are charged for 12 hours of classes, and anything they take beyond that essentially is free, Mullens said. He suggested that lawmakers change that formula to 15 hours, which would allow colleges to generate the same revenue while charging part-time students less per class.

He said the idea could be developed in a pilot program at any three schools of the Legislature's choosing before being applied everywhere.
Students turned away despite nursing shortage

By Lawrence Messina
The Associated Press

While threatened with a shortage of nurses, West Virginia nursing schools turned away 537 qualified applicants this year, lawmakers learned at an interim meeting Sunday.

That waiting list shows both the success and the limits of the state's 17 public and private nursing programs, the joint Legislative Oversight Commission on Health and Human Resources Accountability was told.

Higher Education Vice Chancellor Jim Skidmore offered details to reports provided at last month's interims highlighting the growing nursing shortage.

Skidmore compared the waiting list to the 1,382 qualified applicants who were admitted to both associate and bachelor degree programs.

"Addressing the nursing shortage, that's a very positive number," he said.

The waiting list is also contrasted by 45 vacant slots statewide. Shepherd College, for instance, turned away six associate degree applicants but had room for nine more bachelor applicants.

Delegate Don Perdue, D-Wayne, asked about those on the waiting list.

"Do they leave the state?" he said. "Do they give up on nursing?"

"They probably gravitate to some other type of health program," Skidmore said. "It is a safe assumption that we are not losing them out of higher education."

Officials from various state nursing programs were at the meeting, and nodded in agreement as Skidmore answered the delegate.

Cynthia Armstrong Persily, an associate dean of West Virginia University's nursing school, said expanding existing nursing programs might be difficult.

These programs require hospital settings to train their students. Some hospitals in the state already have five or six nursing classes conducting clinical sessions there at the same time, she said.

"We actually have a story of a patient at [CAMC] Women and Children's Hospital who hid in the bathroom so they would not have to speak to another nursing student," Persily said.

Persily said several programs have begun scheduling clinical sessions on weekends and even over the summer to stretch the use of available faculty and facilities.

The state is also short on faculty. Applying a national standard, West Virginia programs maintain a ratio of eight students for every teacher at clinical sessions, Persily said.

"It's a more intensive and involved setting" than most liberal arts programs, she said.

West Virginia has about 22,000 registered nurses and 7,000 licensed practical nurses. The ranks of RNs are expected to thin by 7,000 by 2008.

As she warned lawmakers last month, Persily said the average age of RNs has reached 45, and 55 for nursing faculty. She also reminded lawmakers that the recent rise in enrollment cannot alone head off the expected shortage.

"We may be increasing our enrollment, but we may not have a correlation in the number of nurses who graduate and then choose to practice here," she said.

Private colleges offer six of the state's 17 nursing programs, and had 29 of this year's vacant slots. Sharon Boni, chairwoman of Alderson-Broaddus College's nursing department, said tuition at these schools is often prohibitive.

Boni is also president-elect of the state Association of Deans and Directors of Nursing Education. She said students also must spend hundreds of dollars on uniforms and supplies. Some also must drive 60 miles one-way to classes or clinicals.

"For some students, that's a lot of money, with gas prices being what they are," Boni said.
1 in 4 PROMISE students would lose award
If new rule implemented

December 9, 2003

CHARLESTON (AP) -- About one in four students who won a PROMISE scholarship this year would have been turned down if new standards had been in effect, according to a report by PROMISE Executive Director Robert Morgenstern.

For example, in Kanawha County, 108 of 504 students, or 21 percent, would not have received the scholarship. In Putnam County, 44 of 178 students, or 25 percent, would have been denied, while in Barbour County, seven of 31 students, or about 23 percent, would not have qualified.

The new standards, adopted in October, require PROMISE recipients to earn a composite score of 21 on the ACT and a minimum score of 19 in each subject area of reading, math, science and English. The minimum score will rise to 20 on July 1 for students who are now high school juniors. Previously, students only had to earn a composite 21 on the ACT.

Low test scores cannot be blamed on the quality of education students are receiving, said Morgenstern, who released the study at an interim legislative meeting Sunday.

"We're looking at student behavior in terms of their course selection and we are looking at the availability of the rigorous courses," Morgenstern said Monday.

Studies have shown there is a direct link between advanced courses students take in high school and whether they are able to get college grades necessary to retain the PROMISE scholarship, Morgenstern said.
College president banned in Md.
His former college’s bankruptcy cost state for student loans

By Tara Tuckwiller
STAFF WRITER

The president of a new West Virginia college has been barred from running colleges in Maryland.

Victor Berlin is president of the University of Fairfax, a private, nonprofit college that started in Virginia last year.

On Friday, the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission gave the school preliminary approval to move its headquarters and a teaching site to Jefferson County, from a site about 45 minutes away in Virginia.

In 2000, the state of Maryland had to pay nearly $1 million to the federal government to make up for student loans that vanished when Berlin’s former career college, General Communications Inc. in Rockville, Md., abruptly shut its doors and declared bankruptcy rather than pay back students’ tuition.

“They [GCI] were going to be required to pay back the students who had paid for training that was inadequate,” said Judy Hendrickson of the Maryland Higher Education Commission. “They chose not to do that. They made a business decision to close, rather than pay the ordered refunds.”

Berlin said Tuesday that he wasn’t president of GCI when it left Maryland in the lurch. He started a new college in Maryland, Potomac College. He became president there in 1991, he said.

“I had been a minority shareholder in General Communications,” he said.

Minority or not, Berlin was an owner of GCI. “And we were getting a number of complaints,” Hendrickson said. When she arrived to investigate, “it was almost mutiny at the school, students were so unhappy. They were very, very unhappy.”

GCI had lured students with the promise of co-op work — on-the-job training for which they would get paid while they studied, Hendrickson said. But only 13 percent of students ever got it.
“They’re very good at marketing,” she said. “In fact, they had a whole room of telemarketers that were soliciting prospective students.

“They’re very good at promising, but not delivering.”

By 1995, Maryland decided that Potomac College had “a number of deficiencies,” and it could only continue to operate within the state “if Victor Berlin and his wife were not involved,” Hendrickson said. “They chose to move the school to D.C.”

Berlin said he “never really understood” why Maryland wanted him out of Potomac College. He said the “dispute” between Potomac College and Maryland was resolved before the move, but he doesn’t remember exactly how. At any rate, he said, Potomac College “ultimately achieved accreditation, and it continues to thrive today.”

The University of Fairfax now plans to seek accreditation in West Virginia. It plans to charge $32,000 for a master’s degree in information systems, and $79,000 for a doctorate. Students are not eligible for federal financial aid.

It can start enrolling students in six months, as long as it shows that it has made contact with the multistate accreditation agency. It can operate for two years, plus possible extensions, before it must allow the agency to visit its campus.

West Virginia does require its colleges to put up a bond — security against things like the $1 million in lost loans in Maryland — but the bond is only $50,000. West Virginia does not have a regulation that Hendrickson said is very important in Maryland: a requirement that a university’s owners have a “history of professional good practice.”

Maryland has another regulation: Once a college owner has closed a school, he or she must pay all student refunds and all fines before being allowed to open another college. “So Victor Berlin couldn’t operate in Maryland” until he paid back that $1 million, Hendrickson said.

“Certainly, if the same people are involved, it raises one’s eyebrow,” said Elliot Hicks, one of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission members who voted to give the University of Fairfax permission to operate here.

Hicks said he was unaware of Berlin’s history in Maryland.

“My assumption, and hope, is that any problems would come to light” during the accreditation process, under the jurisdiction of a multistate agency.

Meanwhile, “the Policy Commission staff will enlarge its investigation to try to cover these things,” Hicks said. “We can’t permit that kind of behavior in West Virginia.”
Judy Hendrickson was surprised to learn recently that Victor Berlin was back in the college business, operating the University of Fairfax out of a Tysons Corner office building and offering information security degrees to adult students.

Hendrickson had led investigations of two of Berlin's trade schools for the Maryland Higher Education Commission in the 1990s. Her counterparts in Virginia never asked to check Berlin's references, she said. If they had, "what we would do is give the information that is public record -- the fact that he was an owner of a school that precipitously closed, leaving 370 students enrolled and having paid millions of dollars for training they were unable to complete."

The University of Fairfax, which started classes for 12 students in July, is not accredited, and it charges $32,000 for a master's program and $78,760 for a PhD in the specialty, according to the school's catalogue. The price is much higher than similar programs at nearby accredited state schools such as George Mason University, where it costs a Virginia resident $7,350 for the new master's program in information security.

Virginia state higher-education officials approved Berlin's application to start a new school without checking his past record, which included leaving many students with little expertise, vast debts and bad credit.

Berlin said it's unfair to compare the price of a Fairfax degree with one from a less expensive, taxpayer-subsidized state school without also comparing class size, staffing and curriculum. He said that George Mason's master's program for an out-of-state student is comparable in price to his and that an executive MBA program at George Washington University is more expensive.

Of his troubles with Maryland regulators, he said: "We were ahead of our time, but the state did not like what we did. We were doing things in a nontraditional way."

Through newspaper advertising and $125 workshops, Berlin's new school has so far attracted about 30 students, most of them in the PhD program, he said in an interview. He said he was "shocked" at the popularity of the doctorate program and attributed it to other colleges' failure to cater to students who are working adults. A George Mason spokesman said its information security program is accessible to working adults, since all of the mandatory courses are offered at night.

Richard C. Jones, a security engineer at Lockheed Martin who spent 20 years in the Air Force and received his bachelor's degree in June from Strayer University, was among the first to enroll for the
graduate program at the University of Fairfax. He said he chose the school because the instructors are practitioners in the security field and the whole curriculum is built around security.

Accreditation from one of the more than 60 associations recognized by the U.S. Department of Education is required for students to receive federal financial aid, and it allows for easier credit transfers between schools. Jones said he is not concerned that Fairfax is not accredited. "It's a cinch that they are going to get their accreditation."

Jones added that Lockheed is going to reimburse him for his tuition payments. Berlin said he tells prospective students that they can't rely on employers' tuition-reimbursement programs because the school isn't accredited.

Another early student, Pamela Woodhull, who worked as a technology professional for more than 20 years, found Berlin's school on the Web but dropped out after learning that it is not accredited. "I think a lot of people are sucked in because we want this information and we want it now," she said. "They say we can get [the degree] quickly. I should know that something that's easy and quick is not always quality."

Berlin maintains that he has recruited top-flight teachers and a state-of-the-art curriculum to respond to a compelling need in the market. Fairfax is organized as an arm of Berlin's nonprofit Potomac Education Foundation.

The Washington area has long been one of the most highly educated parts of the country, and workers often go back to school to update their skills or learn new ones. That has increased the popularity of a number of for-profit schools, from Strayer, which operates here, to the Apollo Group's University of Phoenix, to Kaplan Inc's online law school. Kaplan is owned by The Washington Post Co.

Hassan Gomaa, professor and chairman of the information and software engineering department at George Mason University, which charges Virginia residents $245 per credit hour for its graduate program, compared to $895 per hour for Berlin, agreed there's a market. "The most popular courses that we offer are in information security and that's been particularly the case since 9/11," he said. "We expect [the master's program] to grow a lot as people find out about it. A lot of the students from other programs are asking to transfer into that program."

Susan Baker, vice president for workforce development at the Northern Virginia Technology Council, an industry group for companies and workers, said the technology community is enthusiastic about Berlin's new school. "They have an amazing curriculum," she said. "[Berlin] really understands the needs of the business community. Our member companies are very, very excited about this and about what he's doing."

Area high-tech executives say there is definitely a need for information security specialists.

"We're seeing both within our organization and our customers' organizations quite a need -- at all levels -- for people with some kind of background or formalized education in information assurance or information security," said Hart Rossman, assistant vice president and technical director for the Enterprise Security Solutions Group at Science Applications International Corp.

"I would welcome that in a heartbeat," J.R. Reagan, director of enterprise security at American Management Systems Inc., said of candidates with training in the field. "The challenge we've seen so far is we have to go and get people who have a background in computers and teach them about information
security."

The International Information Systems Security Certification Consortium Inc. (ISC2), an organization that provides testing and certification for professionals in the field, has co-sponsored informational workshops with the University of Fairfax.

"What we're doing really is a joint marketing thing," said Marc Thompson, vice president of ISC2. "We do get concerns once in a while from somebody who says, 'Hey, this guy has a checkered past.' We think his heart is in the right place."

**Past Problems**

Virginia officials said they did not call their Maryland counterparts to check out Berlin's references. "There is nothing in the regulations that give us the opportunity to do a background investigation, so we don't do that," said Frederick "Rick" Patterson, coordinator for private and out-of-state institutions at the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

Maryland has a regulation that requires the owner of a college to have a "demonstrated history of ethical personal and professional practice." Virginia has no such regulation. The state looks at a number of criteria, including financial standing, quality of the faculty and refund policies, when considering a school's application, Patterson said.

The regulator plans to visit the University of Fairfax on Thursday, he said. "If they are compliant with our regulations, then we're happy; if they are not compliant, there'll be some issues."

Berlin's history in Maryland goes back to General Communications Inc., a Rockville career college that recruited low-income adults through print ads and telemarketing calls. School advertisements said people could "earn over $3,500 while you learn," get a job in as little as 16 weeks and accrue college credits through the program. The school charged as much as $7,800 in tuition for clerical training and assisted students in applying for federal student loans.

Maryland regulators issued a report in 1994 saying the state had "identified serious and egregious deficiencies" at GCI, including admitting students who never received high school diplomas or an equivalent degree, and changing the academic program without the approval of regulators.

Lanita C. Perkins, who was 20 when she enrolled at GCI in 1993 with the hope of gaining some computer skills, said she received only a blank piece of paper at the graduation ceremony. She did meet her future husband there, but the couple said they have nothing to show for their time at Berlin's school but bad credit.

In 1995 an administrative law judge who heard the state's case ordered GCI to refund the tuition of about 500 students. The school was also fined $20,000 for misleading advertising and an additional $100,000 for not enforcing its academic standards and attendance policies. Eight days later GCI declared bankruptcy.

The U.S. Department of Education investigated the school and found it to be liable for $4 million. In March 2000, Maryland approved payments of $2,625 to repay the loans of 379 students. The federal government agreed to write off the rest.

Berlin, in the meantime, had opened Potomac College in Rockville, so adults with two years of college
education could finish degrees in management and microcomputer systems management. A site visit by Maryland regulators in 1993 revealed several violations of state standards, including admitting students without two years of college education; inadequate library, curriculum and faculty resources; and poor recordkeeping. Maryland's secretary of education suspended the college temporarily.

By 1994 Potomac College had accepted tuition from 77 students, but it graduated only 16 who met state standards. That year Potomac paid $234,640 in consulting fees to Berlin's foundation. The next year state officials decided Potomac College would be allowed to continue operating only if Berlin and his wife, Janet, did not own or have decision-making powers. So it was sold and eventually moved to the District.

"Potomac College is in good standing" Rolin Sidwell, director of post-secondary education, licensure and certification for the D.C. State Education Office, said this year.

John Sabatini, assistant secretary of the Maryland Higher Education Commission, said, "You have to have students at the forefront of why you're there; Victor had other motivating factors."

Berlin attributed GCI's problems to his being busy at Potomac. "The way I do things is I get things started and then I find management that can run it and then I move on."

Back to School

In 1998, Berlin was hired to run the training division at Anteon International Corp., a Fairfax-based government information technology contractor. It offered courses in computer programming to tech professionals. But Berlin's sights were again set on higher education. In 2000, he persuaded executives at Anteon to create a college that could offer masters degrees in e-commerce, the "it" career of the day.

Seymour Moskowitz, executive vice president of technology at Anteon, said, "Victor Berlin was the force behind the creation of Rockwell University."

"It was an evolution. We said, 'Well, if we added the program management and development courses, we would have a full masters in e-commerce,' " said Moskowitz. "The adult career-changer market was pretty attractive, so we allowed Dr. Berlin to move into that area to see how it worked."

By November 2000 the school was approved to enroll students. Anteon was preparing for a public offering at the time and began to reevaluate its ancillary operations, officials said. Anteon began to shop its training unit, including Rockwell University, to prospective buyers before the school ever enrolled its first master's degree candidate, Moskowitz said. Eventually they found a buyer in Pinnacle Software Solutions, a technology training company, and sold the business in June 2001 for $100,000.

Berlin followed the school to its new owners, but left in December 2001. Daniel Benjamin, Rockwell's new president, said the school is now based in Tysons Corner and has students, though he declined to say how many. The university asked for and was granted an extension for a required site visit from Virginia regulators.

State officials approved Berlin's new school, the University of Fairfax, in May 2002, allowing it to begin advertising and enrolling students. The application said the "tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001 has created a growing need for increased security both locally and nationally."James McCarthy, one of two professors for the master's program listed as full time, said he has yet to conduct a single course at the university. "I have not done any teaching there at this point," said McCarthy, founder and chief
executive of Symmetry Solutions Inc., a Vienna consulting firm. "Full-time professor is pretty far fetched at this point."

Berlin said he believes McCarthy "may have agreed to serve early on," but anything listing him as a teacher should be corrected.

Virginia regulator Patterson said such a situation would be of concern, but that staff changes do occur.

Universities in Virginia have 10 years to seek accreditation with a body recognized by the federal Department of Education. Berlin's new school said in its application that it planned to pursue accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, but it has not yet applied. Alan Edwards, the Virginia higher-education council's assistant director for academic affairs and planning, said his agency is undergoing a major overhaul that officials hope will give it increased oversight. But Edwards said that "in many ways, Virginia is very much a buyer-beware state."

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The University of Charleston wants to open the state’s second school of pharmacy in 2006. On Monday, the U.S. House of Representatives approved $4.3 million in federal earmarks to jump-start the project.

The Senate has yet to vote on the bill.

If the money comes through, it will pay for part of a new building to house the pharmacy school, UC President Ed Welch said Tuesday.

Total cost of the facility will be $10 million. “We would have to fund-raise for the additional dollars,” Welch said.

The university also will fund-raise for money to hire a pharmacy dean and assistant deans. The pharmacy dean might be hired by January.

Meanwhile, UC is collecting applications from pre-pharmacy students, who will be admitted this summer.

“We would hope to have 20 or 30 qualified pre-pharmacy students here in the fall,” Welch said.

After two years of pre-pharmacy, those students — and undergraduates from other pre-pharmacy programs — will be ready for UC’s four-year pharmacy program.

The state’s only other pharmacy school, at WVU, had three applicants for every student opening this year, The Associated Press reported in February.

Also in February, UC was deciding whether to open a pharmacy school, or a law school, or both. WVU also has the state’s only law school. Its pharmacy dean, George Spratto, has said he will work with UC to create its new pharmacy school, but WVU law dean John Fisher said another law school is unneeded.

“We have determined that the pharmacy school is the first priority,” Welch said Tuesday. “We’re devoting our full attention to implementing it, and implementing it well.

“After we do that, a few years down the road, we’ll look again at a law school.”
SYLLABUS


Most students know how to work a computer. But do they all understand how to use it for something as important as privacy?

Neuropsychologist Michael W. Meier, who has studied the effects of computer use on attention, says, "Many students are not aware of how to use computers in the workplace.

The course is designed to teach students how to use computers in the workplace, and how to protect their privacy.

Meier believes that the course is important because it teaches students how to be responsible for their own privacy.

Meier's course is popular, with enrollments of 50 students per semester.

The course is divided into two parts: the first part focuses on the basics of computer use, while the second part focuses on the ethical and legal issues surrounding computer use.

The course is offered in the fall and spring semesters.

Meier says, "I think it's important for students to learn how to use computers in a responsible way, so that they can make informed decisions about their personal information."

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Texas Medical Center Gets $50-Million Gift

The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas has received a $50-million gift, its largest ever, from an anonymous donor. The money will be used to improve the quality of clinical care at the medical center and to support basic research, with the aim of developing new treatments and cures for diseases. Kent Wildenthal, the university’s president, said in a written statement that the donor had expressed a desire for “the medical school to become as well known for excellent clinical care and service as it already is for its outstanding research.” The university expects to collect the gift in cash installments over the next 15 months. It brings to $301 million the total of donations and pledges received to date in the medical center’s fund-raising campaign, which was announced in April 2002 with a goal of $400 million. Campaign leaders said earlier this month that they had increased the goal to $500 million.

— John L. Pullen

Sylvan Enters Central America

Sylvan Learning Systems announced last week that it had bought a university with campuses in Costa Rica and Panama, marking the company’s first expansion into Central America. Sylvan purchased the institution, Universidad Interamericana, for an undisclosed price. Founded in 1966, it enrolled about 5,900 students by 2002.

The institution, whose name translates as Interamerican University, generated revenue of about $7.6 million in 2002. It offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in business, communications, education, engineering, and hospitality. Sylvan now operates a network of universities in nine countries with an overall enrollment of about 110,000 students. About 90,000 of them attend institutions in Central or South America.

— Colleen M. Meseck

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