

# EDUCATION \$ \$ \$ \$ ¢ ¢ GRANTS

By Chuck Johnson

Once upon a time... Education was very important in America. Once upon a time... It was more important to educate someone than to build weapons to destroy someone. College education is rapidly becoming a "once upon a time" thing. With Reagan's budget cuts, millions of now-college students will have to return home to the gas stations and textile mills. Millions more will never even make it to college. Reagan's proposed cuts have shocked thousands. In North Carolina, 51% of college students will be cut off from federal aid in 1983. That is approximately 61,300 students. The American dream of being able to climb the ladder from the bottom to the top is rapidly becoming that: a dream.

While the proposed cuts will not truly affect college students until next fall, they have already begun to change college campuses in many ways: a student migration from private to public colleges has begun; out-of-state students are going back home to school; administrators are toying with exotic new tuition charges; minority students are dropping out in record numbers: there are fewer student services

available on campus; campus health officials are even worried that student stress levels are becoming dangerously high. It has been predicted that the suicide level of college students will rise even higher than they are now.

Dr. William Pickens of the California Post Secondary Education Commission hopes the cuts this year are too big to be true. "Maybe I'm a pollyanna, but the cuts as we have heard them rumored are so extreme that they constitute a complete reversal of national policy for the last ten years. Our minority and female population is decreasing, and this campus is reverting to a typical white male student body," confirms Clayton Lewis, Student Government President at the University of Washington. Statements such as these seem to point out a past era when only the upper-class, white male was able to attend college. At a time when great advancements are being made in science and technology, it would be a tragedy to lose all advancements that have been made for equality and civil rights. The leaders of our past have worked much too hard to lose out to the leaders of today.

The problem is grim, but the solution may be even grimmer. The military may begin to take over college campuses. In 1980, Dr. George Stelmach, a physical education/dance teacher at the University of Wisconsin, received a \$107,000 grant to study how the brain tells the body what to do. "It has a practical application to everything we do - speech, the aging process, whether we fly an airplane, or use a typewriter," says Stelmach, who also heads the University's Motor Behavior Laboratory. He envisions a day when his work could aid sufferers of Parkinson's Disease, or improve sports performances. But Stelmach's grant came from an unlikely source: the U. S. Air Force which presumably wants to learn more about pilots' reaction time than pole vault records. Stelmach's uncertainty over taking the money is going on more frequently at major research campuses these days. The Pentagon, taking advantage of receding memories of college anti-militarism, is muscling its way back into academia in a big way. Military research on campus, in fact, is virtually the only segment of the higher education budget to grow in recent years. The

Pentagon's campus spending has rocketed from \$495 million in the fiscal year 1980, to an estimated \$709.7 million for 1982, according to the National Science Foundation which monitors federal research finances. The same sum would pay the salary of 215,000 fully-tenured professors making \$33,000 a year, or swell the entire U. S. teaching corps by more than 40%. Even though they can't use the money for new professors, colleges are undoubtedly the main beneficiaries of the Reagan Administration's \$20 billion research budget. Over the previous three years, campuses have enjoyed a 70% increase in military research grants. The bulk of the increased spending has gone to the hard sciences. Funds for engineering, physics, chemistry, math and computer science projects are way up, while funds for political science, sociology and other liberal arts fields are down. There is also a 20% increase in military funding for psychological research.

Academic objections and worry about military research have increased as dramatically as the military spending. "The worst thing about military spending," argues Dr. Seymour Melman, a Columbia University professor who has authored several books critical of the Pentagon spending, "is that it sets the tone for the university. It sets the tone for foundation money, and each time leaves a woeful absence of work in other areas. What you're going to have is two kinds of money (on campus), he predicts. "One kind is 'classified', which means closed doors and armed guards. A piece of the university becomes an armed camp. And for unclassified research, you have to remember that the military always has areas of special interest. The money becomes a big magnet, and for every ten applicants (for it), you'll have another ten thinking, 'What does the Defense Department want?' The obvious answer to what they want is frightening. Because with Reagan's policies, they will soon be able to take it - the higher education system as well as its students."

In the next issue: How to fight back and survive the Reagan Administration.



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