

Student Financial Aid Hassle (Continued)

Sen. Sam Ervin Writes . . .

By PETER FISCHER

In the last issue of the N.C. Essay, I stated that I had written a number of letters concerning the school's financial aid policies to members of the Senate, the House of Representatives and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in Atlanta and Washington, D.C.

I recently received a response to my communications from U.S. Sen. Sam J. Ervin, Jr., who is presently in charge of the Senate Committee on Government Operations.

Ervin stated that a blanket financial aid policy restricting high school students on private financial aid in accordance with the federal student aid program which restricts those college students receiving federal is wrong.

As you will recall in my last article, the financial aid policy of the school is one that prevents high school students receiving private financial aid from earning money on a regular job for self-support in order to be fair to those college students who must abide by the federal restrictions concerning their government aid. I have also questioned the interpretation of the federal restrictions that this school follows.

According to HEW guidelines, as I understand them, the first year you are here if you have federal aid restrictions on your earnings, at the end of the year you are to file a report listing the amount you earned and what you used it for. If the money was spent for necessities, the amount of the next year's grant would be unaffected.

If you earn money during the year, regardless of what the need might be, the amount you earn, after the first \$150, will be deducted from your grant.

Ervin wrote: "Every scholarship and student aid program at every college has its own basic requirements under which the student qualifies. Therefore, I do not believe that a school can establish a blanket policy with respect to its scholarships and student aid programs.

From your correspondence, I assume that the scholarship under which you have received assistance is a private scholarship probably set up by some individual or organization interested in furthering the education of young people interested in the arts. Therefore, it cannot be compared with the federal student aid programs which are based on the need of the individual student."

The information from Ervin is quite clear. The fact that he would respond to my letter with the above statements obviously indicates that he feels the policy of the school is incorrect.

Upon receiving this letter, I delivered a copy of it to Martin Sokoloff, administrative director, and briefly discussed its contents with him. Later that day, SCA president Susan Summers went to Sokoloff for his reaction to the letter. Both Susan and I were advised by

Sokoloff to write letters to various arts colleges throughout the country so that we might compare financial aid programs.

The financial aid program at this school is one that affects the future of many students and is under the control of the administration. If this school is to fulfill its function as an educational in-

stitution for the students, its administration should take an active part and interest in clearing up this problem instead of putting the burden of responsibility on the students.

I think this letter presents enough evidence to the administration to prove that the entire financial aid program at the school should be thoroughly in-

vestigated. I am awaiting replies from the directors of the HEW Offices of Higher Education in Atlanta and Washington, D.C. I hope that more facts can soon be obtained for the benefit of the students.

Peter Fischer is a high school Senior on financial aid.

. . . Administration Gives Its Side

By FRANK S. RUARK

Who should have an opportunity to go to college? And who should pay? These are the larger questions implied by Peter Fischer and Susan Summers' more specific questions about off-campus earnings as they relate to financial aid.

The need for admissions requirements can be better answered by others. From a cost standpoint, however, every qualified applicant should have equal opportunity to enroll regardless of their ability to pay. The bills have to be paid. The debate about their payment began early and intensified daily with rising admissions and even faster rising costs.

In quick succession Congress passed the National Defense Student Loan (NDSL), the College Work-Study, and, especially for low-income students, the Educational Opportunity Grant Programs (EOG). Each had its own eligibility requirements, but all were based upon calculated need after a reasonable contribution from parents and self-help (summer and term-time earnings) from students. Schools were to keep giving at least the same amounts of financial aid and scholarships as they had given upon entry into the programs.

EOG and College Work-Study Program job funds are targeted to students in lower family-income brackets. The balance of their needs comes from NDSL and school funds. Too few EOG and Work-Study dollars leave many students from middle-income families with only loans and, where possible, school grants.

Congress passed the Guaranteed Student Loan Act to encourage banks and other lenders to make loans to college students. The government pays the interest during in-school years and guarantees the lender his money in case of death or default.

The Nixon administration wants to put most of its money in the new Basic Educational Opportunity Grant Program (BEOG). Underfunded, the program gives grants only to college freshmen in 1973-74. In 1974-75 it will help freshmen and sophomore. Each student is to receive a maximum grant less a family contribution. The family contribution is calculated by an impersonal, off-campus government contractor, excluding student earnings. The trouble is that an average family with an income of \$12,000,

two parents and two children, one of whom is in college, has a calculated contribution big enough to equal or exceed the maximum. That student gets no grant.

To offset the cost of BEOG's, Mr. Nixon wants to terminate the on-campus EOG (now Supplementary Educational Opportunity Grants) and NDSL programs, leaving only Work-Study and school funds to be awarded on campus. His philosophy seems to be that, except for BEOG and Work-Study awards to students from less-than-middle-income families, the costs of college shall be paid by parents and students from earnings, savings and loans. So far, Congress has saved and continued the Supplementary EOG and NDSL on-campus programs, believing that a school's financial aid administrator is more sensitive than an off-campus agency computer to the needs of individual students.

Despite the confusion and change, certain principles are constant concerning financial aid which includes federal funds:

1) Each student is entitled to a fair, impartial need analysis;

2) Reports from commercial need analysis companies like College Scholarship Service are only tools to help financial aid administrators make fair awards;

3) The administrator must use his best judgment. If he adjusts the calculated parents' contribution and a student's award up or down, however, he must have firm evidence to justify his action;

4) A student should not be "over-awarded" with more financial aid than he needs. If he is, the government claims its money is overspent, and the school must refund it to the government. One school recently had to pay back \$105,000.

5) Each student is expected to use his earnings from summer and term-time on-campus and off-campus jobs to help pay for his education.

6) Voluminous reports in minute detail must be sent each year to HEW. Also, each year a team of accountants from the office of the N.C. State Auditor scrutinizes each penny spent or misspent.

7) Federal funds are available only to college students.

8) Federal regulations do not apply to financial aid awards not including

federal funds to college students. Neither do they apply to our unusual school to awards to high school students.

9) Federal regulations do not apply to scholarships of tuition reductions awarded for talent. If a scholarship winner needs financial aid, however, his scholarship and tuition reduction must be part of—not in addition to—his financial aid.

To some, it seems unfair that a "rich kid" can put his scholarship in his pocket and live it up while the "poor kid" has his counted as part of financial aid. First, don't be too sure the "rich kid" is really rich. Remember the disadvantaged middle class are the ones usually hurt. That scholarship may be the only way his parents can find to pay his bills.

We have argued with HEW that the reduction in financial aid due to term-time earnings is like a 100 percent tax. It destroys initiative and self-reliance. It keeps the student dependent upon the government and the school. HEW replies that since the taxpayers are putting up \$870 million for financial aid this year, they have a right to know that students are not getting more than they need. The problem, then, is national, neither created by NCSA nor peculiar to it.

At NCSA all financial aid for high school students (and a few college students) comes from NCSA funds. Should they be subject to the earnings-reduction policy? Or should they enjoy a loophole not available to those who get federal funds? Students with equal needs receive equal awards. The school does not award less aid to one merely because he does not qualify for federal funds. Since students get the same level of support, they are subject to the same rules. A few do not enjoy special privileges just because federal regulations do not apply to them.

The NCSA Foundation provides more than \$100,000 per year for student financial aid. The money comes from other foundations and from generous friends who want to help our students succeed. If the claims of a few to have special privileges becomes epidemic, our friends may reduce or withdraw their support. We bite the hand that feeds us at our own risk.

Frank S. Ruark is the NCSA Financial Aid Administrator.

Cataracts: A Column of Eye Openers

By SHAWN NELSON

Did you know that President Nixon's administration is introducing into Congress a new military spending bill to appropriate millions of dollars in additional funds for defense in the form of increasing strike accuracy of the Minute Man missile (the U.S. has 1000 of them trained on Russia and assorted targets) from 1900 feet of mark to less than 600 feet of mark! Do we really need this kind of relative infinitesimal accuracy when we learn that each Minute Man missile carries a warhead with eight times the devastating death-load of the bomb that ended the former age of Hiroshima!

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Perhaps the most undistinguished event of this brand-spanking new year was the Comet Kohoutek. For all you dopes who do not know what it is, Kohoutek was the astronomical non-event of the century (a very large, very brilliant comet which no one seems to have seen). If you think you

did see it, then you might have seen white metal telephone poles, jet emission streams, or refracted moonlight and THOUGHT they were the comet, but you never would have seen the comet and if you did then you're lying and I don't want to hear about it. Any reports by farmers that they sighted the comet are purely lies as farmers are always claiming they are seeing new things on the horizon. Indeed, we should be startled to find that they are not charging us extra for it. The guy that "discovered it" (show us the goods) is a Czech astronomer, renown world-wide as one of the best in his field, named Lubos Kohoutek.

But he sure did know how to bull well enough to get a free trip to sunny Florida and Cape "Whatever it is now". Well, Lubos, you sure had us fooled out there with our telescopes in the freezing cold.

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The Drama dept. had a little get-

together the afternoon of Wednesday, February 20, to make announcements, discuss next year's trip to England, plan shows to come, and other tid-bits. For those of you who do not know, the Drama department NEVER meets like that to discuss its "inner workings," or even just to get together for the hell of it as a department. Difficult as it is to get the drama students together it is even more difficult to get the drama faculty together just long enough to have tea and the proverbial crumpets. Before this meeting it seemed that the only time the drama people convened was to hear Polish people (or men sympathetic to their cause) speak on acting; and there was enough Hungarian goulash passed down between those two to feed a whole mime troupe. Anyway, if nothing else comes from the gatherings each month (as they are planned), it will simply be that students and faculty can sit and talk as a forum for a change, and that alone is good.

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The administration decided that the incident concerning the student who "claims" he was attacked by a "big guy with a chain saw" could easily be settled by "returning the hewed limb of the victim" and let bygones be bygones in the hope that a similar incident would not occur. Detective Matt Kniphe, chief investigator in the case, said "the victim hasn't got a leg to stand on" as far as getting charges pressed was concerned. And since no blood was spilled (it was an artificial limb) the case should be dropped in the best interest of both parties. The chain saw, however, was subpoenaed for questioning in a linking incident where a local tree was molested while modeling for a Design & Production scene painting class!

Shawn Nelson is a senior drama major.