

Clinton's education plan faces questions

By Whitney Larrimore with
The College Press Service

WASHINGTON--President Clinton's new two-part approach to higher education spending--a Pell Grant increase coupled with tax credits--is drawing a mixed response among both education advocates and Republicans in Congress.

Most express enthusiasm about the Pell Grant increase, which would raise the maximum grant for the neediest students from its current \$2,700 to \$3,000 next year. However, some favor an even higher grant as an alternative to tax components of the Clinton plan, which some argue would mainly benefit higher-income families at a cost of about \$35 billion.

The tax plan consists of "create a real dilemma," said Arnold Mitchem, executive director of the National Council of Educational Opportunity Associations. He said college presidents "can't go to parents" and criticize the tax plan, even though it costs more than the annual discretionary budget of the U.S. Department of Education.

The tax plan consists of two elements--a \$1,500-a-year HOPE Scholarship to students who maintain a B average, and a tax credit of up to \$10,000 to offset the cost of tuition. Families could choose the scholarship or the credit, which would begin to phase out as the family incomes reach \$75,000 annually.

HOPE Scholarships could

President Clinton's 1998 Budget Highlights for Higher Education

- **Tax Cuts and Deductions:** A \$10,000 tax deduction for the first two years of college or job training, limited to \$10,000 per family, or a \$1,500 tax credit per student. The credit or deduction would be phased out for two-income families earning between \$80,000 and \$100,000. Tax-free withdrawals allowed for Individual Retirement Accounts for families earning up to \$100,000.
- **Grants:** An increase in Pell Grants from \$2,700 a year to \$3,000, starting in the 1998 school year. Families earning about \$20,000 would qualify for a full Pell Grant. Families earning as much as \$45,000 a year would qualify for partial Pell Grant funding. Some low-income, independent students would become newly eligible.
- **Student Loans:** A reduction in loan origination fees from four percent to two percent for need-based Stafford loans, and to three percent on other loans for students and parents. This would give students about \$100 more a year on loans that top out at more than \$5,000 for juniors and seniors. Tax incentives would encourage loan forgiveness for students who become teachers, work in homeless shelters, or become doctors in rural areas.

Source: Department of Education

last up to two years, part of the president's goal to make a community college education within the financial reach of all Americans. Students with HOPE Scholarships would remain eligible for other financial aid programs but would receive the \$1,500 maximum minus other federal grants they receive.

The HOPE scholarships would be funded through a tax cut. Any student who earns a B average would be guaranteed the opportunity

to attend a community college. The proposal would provide students with a \$1,500 refundable tax credit for full-time students during their first year. If they continue to do well in school and stay off drugs, the scholarship will continue for an additional year, providing with \$1,500. This price covers the cost of tuition at most community colleges. Pell Grants would also increase. This increase could be as much as 33 percent from 1995 to the year 2002.

"Any investment in education is good for the country," Mitchem said. However, "both tax plans are irrelevant for a low-income student."

With the rise in available money for Pell grants students will be able to get up to \$5,100 in Pell grants and student loans for their first year in college. Students will also get a new option to obtain loans with a payment plan so that you pay as you can. Money will be available to students who enlist in the National Service, students who are in the top five percent of their high school graduating class, and workers who have been dislocated and need new work skills. The President's new plan will also expand the work study program and allow penalty free withdrawals from Individual Retirement Accounts for education.

One alternative is to spend the equivalent of the tax credit on raising the minimum Pell Grant to as much as \$5,000 a year. Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.) introduced such legislation recently.

"It is frightening to imagine how expensive college would be without the Pell program, and how few lower-income families would be able to obtain diplomas," Wellstone said. A much higher Pell Grant would help the neediest, unlike the tax plan, he said.

However, Wellstone's Pell Grant plan would also reach fewer

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Speaker dismisses Generation X label

Sierra Club president tells MC students that one person can make a difference.

By Amanda Fellers
Staff Writer

Does Generation X really exist? Are we really a generation of slackers, apathetic and without direction?

"The truth of the matter is, it doesn't exist," said Adam Werbach, the keynote speaker at Methodist College's second annual Lura Tally Leadership Forum held Feb. 21.

Werbach is the 24-year old president of the Sierra Club, a non-profit environmental organization with more than 600,000 members. Their purpose is to "preserve, protect, and enjoy" the outdoors. Werbach's presentation to an audience consisting mostly of college students as well as faculty and members of the community, was titled, "There is No Generation X: A Frank Discussion of College Student Activism and the Environment."

Werbach told the audience, "Your youth is your strongest asset." He claimed there are three steps to follow when you want to get something done: Figure out what you want to do; figure out what you're good at; and do it. He quoted the Pepsi slogan: "Be young and have fun." That is your challenge.

According to Werbach, people who think there is a Generation X do not believe that we'll be better than our parents or that the national debt will ever get smaller. Yet young people are making a difference in their communities, he said. The belief that you can change something is the first barrier you have to get over, he concluded.

Werbach enjoys working for the environmental movement because he has seen some success. He recalled his childhood in Tarzana, a suburb of Los Angeles. As a child, he couldn't see the mountains that stood behind his house as the smog was too thick. The smog kept him from going to T-ball practice because it wasn't safe to be outside. We have achieved something, though, Werbach said. Now when he goes home he can see those mountains, partly because of the Clean Air Act, and children can play ball on any given day.

It takes more than one person to get acts like the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act passed, said Werbach, but it is still important to remember that even one person can make a difference.

Werbach gave the example of a bill the Sierra Club had been working on for 10 to 15 years: a bill to help protect the California desert. Although the club had enough votes to pass the bill, it was learned that on the day the bill was to be presented, one of the supportive senators would be vacationing in the Caribbean. The club needed his vote to win. They had to figure out how they were going to get it, so they planned a "dorm storm." One student knocked on hundreds of dorm doors, encouraging other students to call this senator and ask him to be there for the voting of the bill. It took 150 calls before the news arrived that the senator had decided to be present for the voting. The bill was passed. One person did make a difference.

What is the environmental movement about? Werbach explained that there's a misconception. It's not "hippies in tie-dyed clothing" walking around saying "dude." It's about protecting health. It's about protecting what makes America great and beautiful. It's about making sure the people in the next generation can go fishing. It's also about making life fun. Figure out what makes you laugh, Werbach said, what you really love, and motivate those things. Inspire people with the things that you know best.

Werbach closed with the story of a farmer who decided to wait out a flood. The water continued to rise. When a friend asked him to leave, the farmer said, "I'm going to wait here for God to save me." He continued to wait as the water continued to rise. He stayed even though he had a chance to leave in a raft, a boat, and a helicopter sent by the National Guard. Needless to say, the man drowned. He found himself in purgatory asking God, "Why didn't you save me?" God told the farmer that first he had sent him some friends, then a raft, boat, and finally helicopter.

"The rope ladder from the helicopter is all around us," said Werbach. "Your challenge is to redesign everything and grab the rope ladder and climb as fast as you can."

For more information on the Sierra Club, contact Kathy Claspell at 980-0979, Rich Lupinsky at 960-2897, or contact Dr. Suzan Cheek in the political science department at 630-7070.

Campus ministry plans spring break service projects

By Alexandra Dummer
Staff Writer

Most college students make it a tradition to go to the beach during spring break. It's a time to relax and enjoy the warmer temperatures. With the Campus Ministry, this year there is a way to go to the North Carolina coast and give a little something back to the community at the same time.

At minimal cost for participants, you can volunteer to help repair homes of people who suffered damage in Wilmington as a result of Hurricane Fran. It is up to the individual how much time to give. The trip is funded by the Fayetteville Urban Ministry. Participants will be housed in a church fellowship hall and work with the United Methodist Disaster Response. Don't worry if you are not a professional carpenter; any level of skill will be useful.

If you plan to stay in town over the break, there is another project which needs volunteers. A work team will be repairing homes for the elderly and poor families through the Nehemiah Project. You choose the hours you can work, and you get the satisfaction of knowing you have made someone's living conditions better.

Carrie Parrish, the campus minister, says, "I believe it's important for any of us to do some volunteer work when we can." For the past three years, as a continuation of the mission program, the campus ministry has helped victims internationally, in Florida, and throughout North Carolina.

If you are interested in participating or would like more information about the projects, contact Carrie Parrish at 630-7157 or visit her office in the Berns Student Center.

Peer mentor program now accepting applications

Staff Report

Applications are now available for the Peer Mentor program. Peer mentors are students who serve as advisors and teaching assistants in the IDS 110 courses. The mentors are matched with an IDS 110 instructor and assist the instructor in planning the course, presenting the material, facilitating class discussions, and evaluating students' work. A main focus of IDS 110 and the Peer Mentor program is to help students adjust to Methodist College and become academically and socially successful.

Any student who maintains a 2.5 GPA and who has successfully completed IDS 110 is eligible to apply. Preference will be given to students who demonstrate leadership potential, a willingness to help fellow students be successful, sensitivity to and interest in issues of diversity and community service, enthusiasm for Methodist College, and willingness and ability to model appropriate behavior.

Former peer mentors have found that this experience has helped them develop stronger communication, leadership, and goal-setting skills as well as enhanced their ability to plan and organize. They also learned strategies for building community and working successfully in groups.

For more information, contact Kim Dowd at 630-4077. Applications will be accepted through March 24, 1997.



Sophomore center Amy Todd nails two points in the Lady Monarchs' 71-60 defeat of Averett, the DIAC's second-place team, on Feb. 10. Todd was selected DIAC Player of the Week for her performance that week. Methodist enters the DIAC tournament having finished the regular season tied for fifth place. (Photo by Jamee Lynch)

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The *Pride* staff will be taking some time off for spring break. The next issue will be published on April 1. Enjoy your spring break and stay safe.