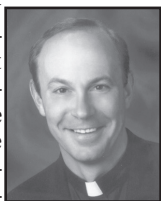


New tuition scheme pushed by students to take effect in '07

BY VINNY SOLOMENO
Dispatches Columnist

Last Thursday in his second annual "State of the University Address," Father Pilarz made an important announcement that will guarantee a fairer framework for students and families paying University tuition when implemented. Most of his address focused around the four themes of the University's Strategic Plan: educational excellence,



PILARZ

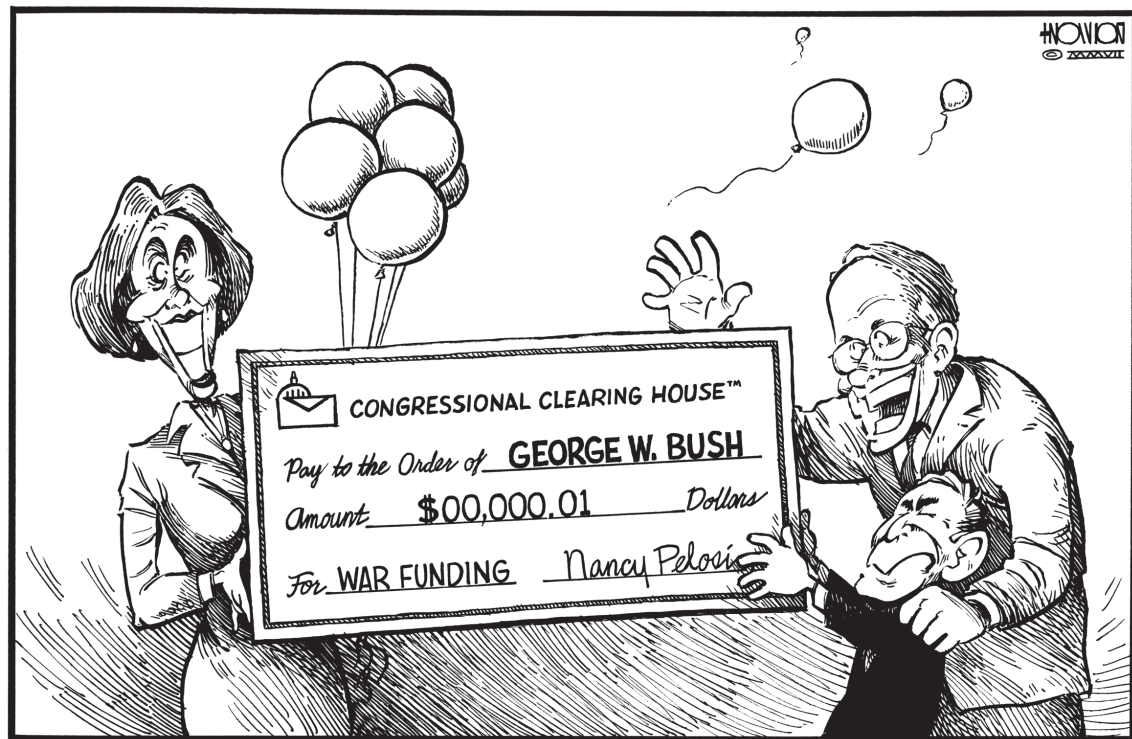
campus community, economic strength and civic engagement. I was happy to hear about the new campus center and other projects, but I smiled broadly when I heard him announce that beginning in the next academic year, The University will introduce differential tuition pricing.

To put it succinctly, differential tuition pricing means that a student pays the same tuition for all four years of the Scranton experience. Last May, the Student Senate recommended such a change. Adopted unanimously, the resolution noted that cost of attendance at Scranton had increased 4.84% each year between 2000 and 2006, a total of 26.63%. In addition to recommending differential tuition pricing, the Student Senate also requested that "the Administration allow students a greater voice in several of the most important decisions reached on this campus - those relating to the budget," and in a broad sense, the document called "members of the University Community [to] join Student Government in collective conversation regarding ... our mission" as it relates to tuition increases.

Through Student Government, we communicated our recommendations to the Administra-

tion, and followed up with meetings to explain student concerns. In most cases, the administrators we spoke with just listened as students recounted personal stories and stressed the significant impact tuition increases had had on their lives. In the end, the decision to implement differential tuition pricing was made by these same administrators, and it must have been not only in the best interests of students, but of our larger community. I am proud of the students who spoke up and offered input as that process was underway. I encourage those reading to view the full text of the March "Student Senate Resolution Regarding the 2006-2007 University Budget" at www.scranton.edu/sg.

Differential tuition pricing has worked at other institutions, and it can work at the University of Scranton. If it had been implemented when the current group of seniors were freshmen, our current rate of tuition would be \$21,208 instead of \$25,638. That is real savings for students and their families, and Father Pilarz and the Administration should be commended for their foresight in this matter. I was smiling when I left the State of the University. In my travails away from the Forum section, I have encountered cynics who say that students are always ignored. Now, I have tangible proof otherwise. The process worked, and student leaders had played a role, however small, by responding to the concerns of constituents and translating what they heard into a formal recommendation to the University Administration. The details have yet to be released about differential tuition pricing. However, a commitment was made. That commitment means that last Thursday was a good day for University students, both now and in the future.



CARTOON BY NOWICKI / MCT CAMPUS

Americans should be wary of Bush's new claims about Iran

SACRAMENTO BEE
MCT Campus

President Bush claims "Iran is providing material support for attacks on American troops." He has presented no evidence, but implies that the Iranian government is killing American soldiers in Iraq, an act of war.

All of this has an eerily familiar ring. The American people should be skeptical.

Iran does pose a potential threat to American interests. But given all we know about claims made to justify the Iraq invasion, there is every reason for Congress to question every claim the Bush administration makes about Iran.

Friday's report from the McClatchy Washington Bureau on a Pentagon unit that used intelligence falsely to link Saddam Hussein to al-Qaeda prior to the Iraq invasion reinforces that point.

With Iraq in chaos, the Bush administration has become increasingly confrontational with Iran. It has launched a special operations mission to target Iranians

in Iraq. It has seized a delegation of Iranians invited to Iraq by Iraqi President Jalal Talabani. It has stationed a second aircraft-carrier group in the Persian Gulf for the first time since 2003. It has sent additional Patriot missile batteries to defend countries within range of Iranian missiles.

The provocative acts are not one-sided. Both countries have conducted war games in the Persian Gulf, and Iran has been test-firing land-to-sea missiles. The possibilities for missteps and provocations that could lead to open conflict are increasing.

Former national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, nobody's idea of an alarmist, believes the Bush administration is drifting toward an attack on Iran. Earlier this month, he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee how this might proceed: "A plausible scenario ... involves Iraqi failure to meet the benchmarks; followed by accusations of Iranian responsibility for the failure; then by some provocation in Iraq or a terrorist act in the U.S. blamed on

Iran; culminating in a 'defensive' U.S. military action against Iran."

Certainly, Iran's nuclear program is a threat. If Iran builds a nuclear bomb, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and others will launch nuclear programs. It is in the interest of the United States to avoid a nuclear free-for-all in the Mideast. Still, years remain before Iran can enrich enough nuclear fuel to build a bomb.

Unfortunately, as in the run-up to the Iraq invasion, the Bush administration focuses primarily on two options - doing nothing or launching air strikes. It will be up to Congress to flesh out the full range of diplomatic carrots and military sticks that can be used to defuse the nuclear issue and others. The discussion in Congress also should expose the costs and dangers of widening war in the Middle East.

Congress needs to take these steps now, before the United States and Iran take irrevocable steps that lead to an armed conflict that nobody should want.

"POSSIBILITIES" COUNTINUED FROM PAGE 4

but not enough to consider him electable. In Quinnipiac's surveys he was 41 percent favorable, 50 percent unfavorable in Ohio; 46 percent favorable, 47 percent unfavorable in Florida.

Those states are critical to any candidate's general election strategy because they mirror the national view. The Fox national poll had Gore at 39 percent favorable, 51 percent unfavorable, while a CBS News January poll had him 32 percent, favorable, 46 percent

unfavorable.

Both men can help their parties' eventual nominees by rallying the faithful when the time comes. Gore may have a future in the movies and Gingrich can make a ton of money on the lecture circuit.

But any rational analysis of the numbers make it clear that if Gingrich and Gore are waiting for lightning to strike, they ought to come in from the rain and get on with their lives.

Obama's race plays unjustified role in presidential campaign

BY PAUL SPALLETTA
Staff Writer

Feb. 10, Senator Barack Obama announced his candidacy for President of the United States. Mr. Obama has risen in popularity since his speech at the Democratic National Convention in 2004, and could very well be the first African-American President. If Mr. Obama wins the presidency or even the democratic nomination, it's going to be an interesting race. We're really going to see the state of racism in this country.

Today, it seems, we like to pretend that racism is dead in America. We turn a blind eye to the fact that African-Americans are disproportionately poor and imprisoned. We ignore the fact that de facto segregation is thriving. We never seem to ask ourselves "How are African-Americans portrayed in the media?" It seems that racism is still very much alive and right in front of us, but we close our eyes and stick our fingers in our ears. The test will really be if America will elect a black president.

But Mr. Obama's run is already in trouble. In the polls he lags behind Senator Hillary Clinton, espe-

cially among African-Americans. That seems kind of alarming. One would assume that African-Americans would love to see a black president. But you know what happens when you assume.

Astoundingly, there has been some debate as to whether or not Mr. Obama is, in fact, black. Debra Dickerson of Salon.com and Stanley Crouch of the New York Daily News, for example, have published articles claiming that Mr. Obama is somehow less black or differently black than they are. Ms. Dickerson even appeared on Comedy Central's "Colbert Report" to present this assertion.

The argument is this: Mr. Obama's father is from Kenya, meaning he is not descended from African slaves brought to America. The argument goes further, suggesting that Mr. Obama has been the victim of little discrimination or racism. Thus, he's not black. Somehow I doubt a white supremacist would reach such a nuanced conclusion. Did Mr. Obama not experience racism because of his heritage? Did someone stop mid-epithet because they realized he's not descended from slaves? Is Ms. Dickerson, for example, saying

she wouldn't vote for Mr. Obama based on his heritage?

Presidents and presidential candidates rarely share anything with the rest of us. How many of us little people have been on "Oprah" or flown in a private plane? How many people know who we are? Mr. Obama's alienation from the black community has little to do with his "blackness" and everything to do with the size of his wallet. It's the same for every candidate and the people they wish to represent.

My fear is that Mr. Obama's campaign will be reduced entirely to the fact that a black man is running for president. There might be some talk about his issues or his character, but it's all going to boil down to being a race about race. If he wins, will it be so white people can slap themselves on the back, as Ms. Dickerson claims? If he loses, will it be because we're all chaw-spittin' hillbilly bigots? Or will it rely on his merits or demerits? Already this debate about Mr. Obama's blackness is simply embarrassing on international level. We can only hope that it doesn't get worse.

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