California's Public-University Systems Take Steps to Raise Tuition by as Much as 30%

By JEFFREY SELINGO

California's two public-university systems, which froze and then retracted their tuition hikes for the economic boom of the late 1990s, took steps on Wednesday to raise tuition for about 600,000 students by as much as 30 percent this fall.

The governing boards of the University of California and California State University, even though California lawmakers remain deadlocked on an overall state budget, that is already two weeks late. But the lawmakers' acrimony would be little time to pass next year's tuition hikes.

"The fee proposed by UC is the minimum fee increase to cover the costs," J. Locke, chancellor, said of the University of California. "But it is in line with what we have planned for the 2003-04 academic year." The fee in the plan is $112.

Last month, the California Board of Regents today after a 7-6 vote of the Regents' Finance Committee, increased in-state tuition at Cal State by 25 percent. In-state undergraduates at Cal State will see their tuition increase from $1,572 to $2,044. For graduate students, the increase would be 30 percent.

"The fee increase is not a tax," said John H. Hughes, chancellor, of the City University of New York. "It is a way of meeting the cost of education." The office of University Relations, Thursday, July 17th, 2003

"At this time, it is prudent for each CSU campus to review its current 2003-2004 enrollment scenario and prepare contingency plans for reducing enrollment," Mr. Reed wrote in a letter last month to presidents of the system's 23 campuses.

Officials at the University of California, meanwhile, pledged on Wednesday that they would avoid cutting enrollment to pay for reductions in state aid, at least for now. Under the plan approved Wednesday by a 5-to-4 vote of the regents' finance committee, in-state undergraduate tuition would rise by 25 percent, to $4,794. But the regents also gave Mr. Atkinson the authority to raise tuition by an additional 5 percent, depending on how the state-budget crisis is resolved.

The tuition increases for this fall will come on top of midyear raises, approved last December, that took effect in both systems this spring. Even though that fee increase marked the first time either system had raised rates since 1994-95 (and fees were even cut at one point), the debate over tuition at the University...
California's Public-University Systems Take Steps to Raise Tuition by as Much as 30%

By JEFFREY SELINGO

California's two public-university systems, which froze and then rolled back tuition by 10 percent during the economic boom of the late 1990s, took steps on Wednesday to increase their price tags for some 600,000 students by as much as 30 percent this fall.

The governing boards of the University of California and California State University systems acted even though California lawmakers remain deadlocked over how to close a $38-billion hole in a state budget that is already two weeks late. But after delaying votes on tuition increases this spring in the hope that the budget picture would clear up, members of the two boards said that if they waited any longer, there would be little time to notify layoffs or tuition cuts.

"The fee proposal is a difficult one," said Richard C. Atkinson, president of the University of California. "But it is only one of many actions being taken to cope with this budget crisis."

The University of California's tuition plan must go before the system's Board of Regents today after narrowly passing a board committee on Wednesday. But the decision by Cal State is final, as its Board of Trustees blessed a 30-percent increase on Wednesday. In-state undergraduates at Cal State will see their tuition -- or "fees," as tuition is known in California -- rise to $2,044 from $1,572. For graduate students, fees will rise to $2,254 from $1,734.

When Cal State's board delayed a vote on tuition in May, it had been considering a 25-percent increase proposed by Gov. Gray Davis, a Democrat. But every week since then, the state's fiscal crisis has worsened, leading Cal State's chancellor, Charles B. Reed, to push for a larger increase, one that even he admitted may not prevent layoffs or enrollment cuts.

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The tuition increases for this fall will come on top of midyear raises, approved last December, that took effect in both systems this spring. Even though that fee increase marked the first time either system had raised rates since 1994-95 (and fees were even cut at one point), the debate over tuition at the University
of California grew contentious several times during a two-hour discussion at the regents' meeting on Wednesday.

The state's lieutenant governor, Cruz M. Bustamante, a Democrat, accused university officials of lying when they reported that even with the proposed increases, tuition rates would still be lower than in most other states. Mr. Bustamante, an ex officio regent, said that analysis had failed to take account of room-and-board costs. "This increase lacks vision and is shortsighted," he said.

Ward Connerly, a regent who voted against the proposal, said the university should figure out a way to spread the increase over a longer period of time, even at the expense of academic quality. "What good is quality," he said, "if we're closing people out?"

While many other regents opposed the idea of imposing a large tuition increase on families during difficult economic times, the plan is still likely to pass the full board today because the regents have few other choices. University officials also noted that, in general, students from families with incomes of $60,000 or less will have the increase fully covered by financial aid.

Several regents said the university system needed to develop better tuition policies in the long run, including regular increases or raises tied to the family income of students.

"Students should pay the cost of their education," said John G. Davies, a regent and San Diego lawyer. "The students in the last seven years got a bargain, and the students here now are paying the cost."
Staten Island

A Staten Island dog is ridding a local college of Canadian Geese and saving the school a whole lot of money in the process.

Bud, a two-and-a-half year old border collie, black lab mix, was brought in to help solve the goose dilemma at the College of Staten Island last year. Since then, he's been a top dog when it comes to chasing the birds away and keeping the campus clear of their unpleasant droppings.

"He has successfully scared the geese away from the campus with no harm to any of the wildlife," said Vincent Bono, the CSI Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds at the college. "And he basically feels like he has died and gone to dog heaven because he has this 204-acre campus to work, and he loves it."

The college purchased Bud for just $25, a bargain, school officials said, considering the fact that a chemical anti-goose spray would have cost the college $80,000.

JULY 16TH, 2003

Staten Island Dog Helps Rid College Of Unwanted Birds
Patron Saint of Sore Shoulders

In Brooklyn, Proudly Carrying 4 Tons of Tradition

By JAMES ESTRIN

This was a day to honor St. Paulinus. His saint's tower — four tons, 70 feet tall — waited. A hundred and twenty men stood poised to lift and carry it down Havemeyer Street in Brooklyn.

Sal Mazzatenda, 49, focused his thoughts on his wife, Gina, who died last month. "I was praying to God that any pain I feel I could get her that much closer to heaven," Mr. Mazzatenda said. "I don't feel the pain while I lift. I could do this all day, I never get tired. You go into a zone when you lift this thing. It's exhilarating."

They say that when St. Paulinus — a fifth-century bishop and poet — was freed from slavery, he was welcomed home to Nola, Italy, with lilies.

The people of Nola still remember the saint by erecting giglio (lily) towers. And Nola's sons and daughters brought the tradition to New York.

When the saint's tower is lifted again tonight at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Williamsburg, it will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the giglio festival in Brooklyn.

"The giglio is a link between this world and the next," said the Rev. Joseph Fonti, who is pastor of the Roman Catholic Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. "It points us toward..."
The Metro Section

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The 120 men, who lift the tower 25 times just to travel four blocks, take on the burden as a religious penance to remember dead relatives as well as to honor family and neighborhood tradition. And it is a test of manhood, according to Dr. Joseph Sciorra, 48, a folklorist at the John D. Calandra Italian-American Institute at Queens College. "The giglio is also about the correct way of being in the world, masculine prowess and a mature masculine responsibility," he said.

The lifts are led by five capos, or chiefs. Those men who reach the position of No. 1 capo, the leader of the whole endeavor, consider it the highlight of their lives.

"It's in my blood," said Phil Galasso, a former sanitation worker who has lived in the neighborhood for all of his 50 years. "It's a way of life. My grandfather was a tutti capo, my father was tutti capo. Being the No. 1 capo is the greatest honor, the thrill of a lifetime."

The current giglio celebration, which ends Sunday, is the result of a merger of two feasts, one honoring St. Paulinus with the giglio and the other dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, in 1954. The 12-day feast features three separate processions of the statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel through the community and three giglio lifts, plus two children's giglio lifts of a 350-pound, 20-foot tower.

Last Sunday morning, a procession led by a brass band and Father Fonti wound its way through Williamsburg picking up the capos at their homes.

The first stop this year was the home of Joseph Galasso Jr., Phil's nephew, a 25-year-old New York City firefighter who is playing the Turk, the hero who helped St. Paulinus to freedom. Mr. Galasso made a grand entrance riding atop the ladder truck from his firehouse nearby.

After Mass, the crowd grew, fueled with sausage and peppers and bread. The lifters gathered around the giglio. The brass band climbed onto the giglio tower. Father Fonti blessed the lifters. Phil Galasso shouted "musica." As the music played, Mr. Mazzatenda and his fellow lifters began their four-hour journey with a giglio on their shoulders. Wives shouted encouragement — and occasional advice. The giglio followed a narrow path, at times pressing dangerously close to the sausage booths and carnival games. The crowd of 4,000 cheered wildly at the completion of each lift.

At the end of the last lift, Mr. Galasso shouted four commands, the men bent their legs, the giglio hit the ground and the lifters cried for joy. The pain would set in soon.

"It's a sweet pain," said Mr. Mazzatenda, who has a tattoo of St. Paulinus's tower on his right arm near the permanent lump on his shoulder from 22 years of giglio lifting. "It doesn't bother you because you know what you did this for, why you did it, and you love the feast with all your heart and soul."
A Looming Storm

NYC’s coming cash crunch

After a winter and spring filled with budgetary “doomsday” talk in City Hall, New York’s latest fiscal crisis has been interrupted by an eerie, eye-of-the-storm calm. In the space of two months, Mayor Bloomberg’s demands for union concessions and program cuts gave way to unilateral budget restorations and celebratory photo ops with City Council leaders.

To the extent they pay attention to this stuff, most New Yorkers probably feel like the elderly Queens resident quoted in a recent Times story: “They haven’t got the money, and then all of a sudden they’ve got it?” she asked. “What is that?”

The short answer: Due to massive tax increases and windfalls from Albany and Washington, the city has entered a new fiscal year with much more money than it had expected. But that cash will rapidly be spent, and the fiscal crisis will reassert itself soon enough probably soon after City Council elections are over. Which may be in six weeks.

Excluding state and federal aid, and adjusting for the use of prior-year surpluses, the portion of the budget financed by the city’s own revenues is up nearly $1.4 billion for the fiscal year that began July 1. This represents a growth rate of 4.5 percent at a time when the regional cost-of-living index is rising by just 2.3 percent.

The newly adopted budget will bring the total city-funded spending increase under Bloomberg to nearly $2.2 billion, or 7.3 percent, since he took office in 2002. The inflation rate for this period is less than 5 percent.

Bloomberg has not actually reduced the cost of city government. However, beneath the inflation-plus growth trend are signs that, for the time being at least, he has clamped a lid on core operational expenses.

In fiscal 2004, almost all of the projected increase in city-funds spending can be attributed to the rising cost of pension-fund contributions and debt service. The former is driven by the pension fund’s sagging investment values and costly benefit increases approved by the state in the late 1990s; the latter is driven by past capital spending (much of it poorly managed and wasteful, especially in the school-construction area) and by the 10-year deficit notes that Bloomberg used to help balance last year’s budget.

Exclude pension and debt costs, and all other city-funded expenditures are slated to increase by just $47 million, a fraction of a percentage point. This measure of spending growth has come to a near-halt for two reasons:

- Union contracts requiring annual across-the-board salary increases have expired.
- The budget calls for a slow, continuing reduction in the headcount of city employees.

But holding the line on wages and salaries will not be nearly enough to permanently balance the city’s budget in the long term. City spending is projected by the city to continue growing at twice the rate of inflation over the next four years. Pensions and debt service alone are projected to rise by another $2.9 billion in fiscal years 2005-2007, accounting for virtually the entire projected budget increase above inflation during that period.

These trend lines help explain why Bloomberg is projecting a budget gap of $2 billion for fiscal year 2005, growing to $3.3 billion by 2007. Although the mayor and council have enacted more than $3 billion in tax and fee increases since the start of 2002, and tax-revenue jockeyed to keep pace with inflation, revenues in the nation’s richest and most heavily taxed city still won’t be sufficient to keep pace with spending.

Furthermore, the revenue projections that form the basis of the city’s budget gap projections assume, improbably, that there will be no negative economic fallout from city and state tax increases. In fact, the last round of major city and state tax increases in early 1990s helped exacerbate a recession in which New York lost more than 300,000 jobs, just as tax cuts boosted the roaring comeback of the late 1990s.

To be sure, the economic impact of higher state and city taxes will be mitigated by the pro-growth effects of federal tax cuts, especially cuts targeted to Wall Street investors. But the city continues to lose private-sector jobs, and its economic outlook remains uncertain at best. New York City’s economy shrunk by another 2.7 percent in the first quarter of 2003, even as the national economy was slowly expanding, according to the city comptroller’s office.

Bloomberg can argue with some justification that his ability to control the main factors driving budgetary growth — particularly pension costs, and Medicaid as well — is limited. But that just means the mayor should be loudly, insistently and consistently pounding on Albany to deliver reforms in these areas.

In the meantime, he and the council must do more to reduce the spending they can control.

E.J. McMahon is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute.
2003 EXPLORING COLLEGE FAIR

Picture yourself as a high school junior. What are your major concerns in life? What keeps you up at night? Okay besides boy-girl problems and scoring a later curfew, COLLEGE looms in the near future for most rising seniors. It is an exciting prospect, but often a source of stress and confusion. To remedy this, the City University of New York and Exploring were proud to present their first ever college fair for high school students. The college fair was able to shed light on two major obstacles facing today's high school students, one being the actual application process itself and the second problem being that of financial aid and securing funds for tuition. The event was a great success and a valuable complement to Exploring's efforts to prepare young people for productive futures.

Hosted at the CUNY Graduate Center, the fair had representatives from all the City Colleges and citywide programs within the university. CUNY's Chancellor Matthew Goldstein addressed the attendees and offered his own advice and guidance to the youth. The students gained much-needed information about the various CUNY campuses, so they can make informed decisions in the upcoming year. After the general fair, workshop sessions were available in order to provide more specific information about financial aid options and the pre-admission process. The net effect was to make the Explorers feel they can negotiate all these applications successfully and actually make the leap into college. "I learned a lot about the various CUNY colleges, as well as the financial aid and scholarship programs available," said college fair attendee Benousie Cajuste. Candice Allen said that "the representatives broke down what requirements are necessary to enter college."

The students were impressed with the fair as a whole, and especially with the encouraging words of Chancellor Goldstein. Many thanks to the City University of New York for making the first annual college fair possible for our Exploring students!

Jay Hershenson, Vice-Chancellor of CUNY, Alair Townsend, Publisher of Crain's NY Business, and Matthew Goldstein, Chancellor of CUNY.

CUNY representatives fielding questions from Explorers.
Mike mulls ‘don’t ask’ immigr rule

By FRANK LOMBARDI
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Mayor Bloomberg is considering modifying his recently issued Executive Order 34, which has raised a furor among immigration activists.

Issued in May, the order revised a city policy generally barring city employees from disclosing the immigration status of individuals seeking or receiving city services, with the exception of those accused of crimes.

Critics of the order contend that by easing disclosure restrictions, the executive order is making immigrants fearful of reporting crimes to police, and of seeking vital city services, such as health care.

"The mayor has heard the concerns that have been raised and is considering modifying the order," mayoral spokesman Ed Skyler said yesterday.

Skyler also said that Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly has directed his officers not to inquire about the immigration status of crime victims, witnesses or others “who call or approach police officers seeking assistance.”

Skyler made his comments in reaction to a press conference earlier yesterday by some City Council members who have been prodding the mayor to revise his order because it has had a chilling effect on many immigrants.

‘Horror stories’

“We have a host of horror stories,” said Councilman Hiram Monserrate (D-Queens) at a City Hall press conference with other Council members and immigrant rights activists opposed to Executive Order 34.

Monserrate and 32 other Council members are sponsoring the Access Without Fear bill, which would substitute a new city law for Executive Order 34. The bill would impose greater restrictions on disclosures that could be made by city employees of confidential information obtained from applicants for city services.

Monserrate’s bill would re-impose the general “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy regarding immigration status that had been in effect through three prior mayors.

Bloomberg changed the policy, citing court rulings on a 1996 federal law that makes it unlawful for local governments to bar employees from reporting undocumented immigrants to authorities.

Monserrate has been negotiating with the mayor and some of his top aides to change Executive Order 34, using the threat of passing his bill as leverage. He met Tuesday with Deputy Mayor Carol Robles-Román and is scheduled to meet with Bloomberg next Thursday.

“I’m hopeful the administration will eventually come to terms,” Monserrate said.
Study: Charter School Students Outscore Public Schoolers

By KATHLEEN LUCADAMO
Staff Reporter of the Sun

Students at charter schools academically outperform their peers at traditional public schools, a new report says.

Researchers at the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank, found that the charter school students scored, on average, three percentile points higher in math and two percentile points higher in reading than their public school counterparts.

The study, "Apples to Apples: An Evaluation of Charter Schools Serving General Student Populations," examined 11 states with a heavy concentration of charter schools.

They compared standardized test scores taken in 2001 and 2002 in 1,200 schools — 600 charter schools and 600 public ones. Various grades were included.

Texas and Florida demonstrated the widest disparities. In Florida, charter school students performed six percentile points higher in both reading and math.

In Texas, they scored 7 points higher in math and 8 points higher in reading.

"Charter schools are an important and big reform that has been poorly studied in the past," said co-author Jay Greene.

Rather than relying solely on demographic information — race and poverty — the Manhattan Institute fellows also examined geography.

"If you pair two schools in Harlem, they are going to be more similar than if you pick a school in Harlem and one in Brooklyn," Mr. Greene said.

New York was not one of the states studied because there weren't enough charter schools open for more than two years, he said.

Often, said Mr. Greene, researchers select "similar" schools by how many students qualify for free lunch. But nearly 40% of students nationally qualify, he said, and the family income levels vary significantly.

Mr. Greene suspects charter schools showed more significant gains for two reasons: Less regulation and more competition.

"Charter schools are less regulated by states and may have more flexibility to develop strategies to meet the needs of their students," Mr. Greene said. "Because charter schools are schools of choice, they have to compete to attract their students and they have incentive to do a good job. Neighboring schools are assigned their students and have less incentive to do a good job."

Overall, he said, charter schools made modest gains. Still, he predicts, they'll continue to make more significant gains in the future.

"The main reason we think charter schools aren't having a bigger effect is because they are start-up schools," Mr. Greene said. "It takes time to figure out how to do a good job."

With vouchers, he said, students attend already established private schools. Charter schools are publicly funded, privately run schools and, at least in New York, most only opened in the last five years. "Charter schools have a disadvantage in that respect," he said.
THE REGION

New FDA Lab Whets UCI's Appetite for Student Enrichment

The agency prepares to move into a $40-million center next to the Irvine university, which sees it as a source of research and jobs.

By Ashley Powers
Times Staff Writer

June 25, 2003

Near the heart of UC Irvine, the new federal Food and Drug Administration building is all sharp angles, sweeping arcs and windows. Inside are labs able to pinpoint where a disease broke out or whether produce trucked across the border was tainted by pesticide.

The FDA has planned only five such centers nationwide — where labs handling caseloads from several states are next door to enforcement officials who can halt production and seize questionable products. In the next month, the center will be filled with scientists from an aging Los Angeles lab and FDA officials who had been working in rented space nearby.

Its location next to UCI is unusual: Only one other FDA center is nestled near a college campus. There may be profit in proximity.

The FDA will own the new facility, far from the overcrowded Los Angeles neighborhood that has been the lab's home for about five decades. And close at hand will be a research university whose professors and students are eager to collaborate with the FDA. The plan has a forerunner in New York City's York College, which houses the Northeast regional lab.

Alonza E. Cruse, director of the FDA's Los Angeles district, was in New York when that lab opened in Queens. Students since fall 2001 have funneled through FDA programs, and agency staffers have worked as adjunct professors at the small college.

Long before Tuesday's 70-minute dedication ceremony, Cruse and UCI leaders were talking partnership. UCI envisions field study or part-time work for those majoring in the biological sciences, chemistry or environmental analysis, said Jonathon Ericson, who leads the UCI faculty committee working to mesh the FDA and university's plans over the next six months.

"It makes a good bridge — between state and federal government, from lab to lab, between intellectuals," Ericson said.
Both sides have talked of further tapping the academic talent pool down the street — again, as is done with York. When the City University of New York board approved the sale of its land to the FDA, it was on the condition that the college's 6,500 students benefit academically. A dozen students work in the FDA labs each semester, said Edward Weil, York's provost and vice president for academic affairs.

So it shouldn't hurt that the nearly $40-million Irvine building holds the latest technology. Nozzles and spigots line pristine countertops in the two-story, 135,000-square-foot building. Scientists will be able to scan for hair and bugs in food, and screen imported produce in what's known as a "pesticide kitchen."

The FDA's 100 or so researchers and technicians will join the nearly 95 administrative staffers who have worked in Irvine since 1995 in a leased office across from the new facility.

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Key Republican Lawmaker Suggests Giving Bigger Pell Grants in Freshman and Sophomore Years

By STEPHEN BURD

Washington

The chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee on higher education said on Tuesday that he may introduce legislation that would alter the way that Pell Grants are distributed to students from low-income families. Under the plan, the government would provide the greater portion of Pell Grant support during the first two years of college, with smaller grants going to students later in their college careers.

Speaking at a hearing of his subcommittee, Rep. Howard P. (Buck) McKeon, a California Republican, said that he was "toying with the idea" of including such a proposal as part of legislation to renew the Higher Education Act, the law governing most federal student-aid programs. He said he believed that "front loading" Pell Grants would help keep low-income students in college by allowing them to avoid taking out large student loans right away. Most students who drop out do so between their first and second years of college.

This proposal "could help a student who really is not sure of his chances of completing his education," Mr. McKeon said. "He can concentrate during his first year, and not have to worry about loans."

If Mr. McKeon moves forward with legislation, he is likely to receive the support of the Bush administration. While campaigning for the presidency in 2000, Mr. Bush proposed increasing the maximum Pell Grant for first-year students only. The administration, however, backed down from the plan after many college lobbyists spoke out against it (The Chronicle, March 9, 2001).

While the idea of providing larger grants early in college is popular with community-college officials, many leaders and lobbyists for four-year colleges oppose it. Such a policy, they say, could prompt disadvantaged students to drop out when their grants are reduced (The Chronicle, February 16, 2001).

There were no representatives of four-year colleges among those who were invited to testify at Tuesday's hearing. The witnesses -- who included representatives of a community college, a for-profit career college, and advocates for programs that help motivate low-income students to apply to college -- spoke unanimously in favor of front-loading Pell Grants.

"If additional funding was available through Pell Grants for the first and second year, we'd see the dropout rate fall significantly," said Christina R. Milano, executive director of the National College Access Network, an alliance of community-based college access programs.
Also speaking in favor of the idea was Rep. Ruben E. Hinojosa, a Texas Democrat on the subcommittee. "In my opinion, this would help a lot of students," he said.
Students Increasingly Turn to Private Loans, Report Says

By WILL POTTER

Private loans increasingly determine whether students can attend the college of their choice, according to a report released on Tuesday by the Institute for Higher Education Policy.

The amount of private borrowing has increased by 346 percent since the 1995-96 academic year, to more than $5-billion annually, according to the institute, a nonpartisan research organization based here. That is more than the federal government awards through the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Work-Study, and Perkins Loans programs combined, the report says. The number of education-loan packages available from private lenders has grown to 272 in 2003, from 79 in 1997, according to the report.

"Federal student aid -- the main source of assistance to students -- is much less effective than it used to be in supporting choice," the report says. This has led "many students to turn to private loans and other sources of external support as a major vehicle to allow them to choose the college that they wish to attend."

The report is likely to be cited by both supporters and opponents of increasing the federal student-loan limit. The debate over changing the limit has come up as Congress prepares to extend the Higher Education Act, the law that governs most student-aid programs. And that debate also includes what happens to students after they graduate and begin repaying the loans.

"There's also a big problem with student debt in this country," said Mary Cunningham, legislative director for the United States Student Association, which opposes increasing the federal-loan limits. "Let's talk about that, which sometimes gets muffled in the talk about what students must do to get in the door. Let's focus on the back end as well."

Borrowers who turn to private lenders are, not surprisingly, those with the most expenses: students who face high costs other than tuition, such as room and board, or who attend law or medical schools, or high-priced private universities.

"Students are getting whatever they can through grant programs, which aren't keeping up with the price of college, taking federal loans if they qualify, and augmenting that with private loans," said Jamie P. Merisotis, president of the research group.

A high proportion of students with private student loans have also borrowed the maximum under the federal programs: 77 percent of professional students, 50 percent of undergraduates, and 32 percent of
graduate students.

The report stops short of making any policy recommendations. Increasing the federal-loan limit could decrease private borrowing in the short term, the report notes. "However, it is less clear whether increased federal loan limits will have any effect on private loan borrowing in the long-term, or whether increasing the loans limits for all students would be the best use of scarce federal resources," the report says.

Legislators should consider increasing the federal loan limit only for the neediest students, the report adds.

The text of the report is available online at the Institute for Higher Education Policy's Web site (requires Adobe Reader, available free).
House Panel Approves Increased Funds for NSF and AmeriCorps, but Not as Much as Some Had Hoped

By ANNE MARIE BORREGO

A U.S. House of Representatives appropriations subcommittee on Tuesday approved a budget of $5.6-billion for the National Science Foundation in the 2004 fiscal year, an increase of about 6 percent over the current year, and $158-million more than the Bush administration's budget request of $5.4-billion.

The subcommittee, which also sets spending levels for the Corporation for National and Community Service, the organization that administers AmeriCorps, approved a $480.2-million budget for fiscal 2004 for that agency. That amount falls almost 20 percent short of the administration's $598-million request but is an increase of $96-million over the current year's spending.

While the increase in money for the National Science Foundation is substantial, it falls short of what many research advocates and some members of Congress had hoped for.

Last year, the House Committee on Science helped shepherd legislation through Congress that would allow the doubling of the NSF's budget by 2007. Congress authorized a budget of $6.391-billion for the agency this year. But even though President Bush signed the doubling bill into law, the administration's request fell far short of what Congress had authorized, sparking the ire of many lawmakers.

Rep. Sherwood L. Boehlert, a Republican from New York and chairman of the House Committee on Science, has been leaning on members of the Appropriations Committee to approve the full amount allowed under the doubling authorization. Earlier this year, he sent a letter to James T. Walsh, a fellow New York Republican and chairman of the subcommittee that appropriates money for the foundation, requesting the full $6.391-billion, about 20 percent more than the foundation will spend this year.

In April, members of the Senate Appropriations Committee criticized what they felt was a meager request from the Bush administration. Sen. Christopher S. Bond, the Missouri Republican who heads the subcommittee that sets the budget for the foundation, said he was "deeply disappointed" by the $5.4-billion the administration had proposed.

Late last week, the Senate committee passed an amendment to a separate appropriations bill that would provide AmeriCorps with $100-million in emergency funds for the current fiscal year. However, the House bill does not contain a similar provision, and the two houses have yet to set a date to work out their differences.

This was the first time that AmeriCorps had received an allocation from the House subcommittee. In the
past, it was given funds either at the full committee level or on the floor. AmeriCorps has been the subject of public scrutiny this summer, after it disclosed that it would not have enough money to pay for all of the 50,000 volunteers who were planned for this year. The subcommittee's proposed budget would pay for 55,000 volunteers next year. The administration had hoped to support 75,000 volunteers.

The full House Appropriations Committee is expected to take up the bill on Monday. The Senate appropriations subcommittee that handles both the science foundation and AmeriCorps has not scheduled a meeting to debate its version of the spending bill.
with disrespect by city workers.

Frank Sobrino, a spokesman at human resources, said they already offer translation in person or via telephone.

"We provide services in 125 languages which I think says a lot about our efforts to serve the city's diverse population as best we can," Sobrino said.

Liu said there's still a need.

"The bottom line is I believe the city is capable of providing first-class service and that first-class service should be provided across the board to all New Yorkers and not leaving some people out," Liu said.

Sobrino said food stamp applications are provided in nine languages in addition to English.