

THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION



WINTER 2008 VOLUME XXII, NO. 4

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Pulling Rank

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World-Class Care

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THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

NEJHE'S CONNECTION

Volume XXII, No. 4

Winter 2008

Cover photo by Michael Harney

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New England higher education is about to experience a decade-long demographic crisis unlike any it has seen. Colleges and universities that enjoy a unique niche—or can carve one out—will be in position to withstand the coming crisis. Those that try to be all things to all people may not make it.

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It's easier than ever for students to sabotage their own futures and reputations with indiscriminate postings, illicit photographs and tell-all blogs. Parents, college administrators and public officials are grappling with how to protect users from others and from themselves.

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the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts,
New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

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EDITOR'S MEMO

Musings

In the last Editor's Memo, I noted that the Montgomery GI Bill provides monthly stipends that can be used toward college, but service members must contribute a portion of their military pay to be eligible. I neglected to mention that it's a use-it-or-lose-it proposition; the government holds onto those contributions if the returning GI decides not to pursue education—or dies. The government is sitting on top of hundreds of millions in these funds, according to Sandy Cheiten's estimate.

* * * *

The New England Economic Partnership's most recent outlook conference sent a fairly grim message: rising oil prices, foreclosures and other factors could create a recession by spring. The group's national forecaster Mark Zandi suggested among the "good news" the fact that corporate profit margins remain high and labor is not in a position to push for higher wages. It can be a dismal science.

* * * *

A Public Interest Research Group report suggests that more than one-third public four-year college graduates would face serious financial hardship if they attempted to work as social workers while repaying their loan debts. Tufts University and others have hit on an idea that sounds as good as motherhood and apple pie ... forgive the loans of students who go into low-paying public interest jobs after graduation. Northeastern University economist Paul Harrington predicts a perverse labor market outcome: students who come from low-income backgrounds will have a powerful new incentive to pursue low-income careers.

* * * *

It's not surprising that according to a *The Chronicle of Higher Education* review of data from the Center for Responsive Politics—of the more than \$6.2 million donated by academe so far in this presidential election, more than three-quarters went to Democrats. Sen. Barack Obama has received the most, about one-third or approximately \$2.1 million. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton ranked second with about \$1.6 million. Among Republicans, former Mass. governor Mitt Romney brought in the most donations from academe, although less than one-third the amount donated to Obama. Topping the presidential campaign donor list of New England college and university employees is Harvard University.

* * * *

As this issue goes to press, we prepare to say goodbye to NEBHE President and CEO Evan S. Dobelle. The Westfield State College board of trustees selected Evan as the college's 19th president in a unanimous vote on Dec. 12. Under Evan's leadership over the last three years, NEBHE has launched its ambitious College Ready New England initiative; convened thought-provoking and action-oriented conferences, including the recent New England "Leadership Summit" on college readiness and success that brought more than four hundred regional and national education leaders together in Boston; grown the New England Higher Education Excellence Awards program into a major regional event; and re-branded NEBHE's journal *Connection* as *The New England Journal of Higher Education*. We expect Evan will bring his internationally known expertise in creating dynamic partnerships between institutions and their host communities to Westfield State, enrich the experience of its students and faculty and be an unstoppable advocate for everyone's right to a college education.

John O. Harney is executive editor of THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION. Email: jharney@nebhe.org.

Altered States

From the mid-19th to the mid-20th century, New Hampshire and Vermont shared many cultural similarities. Both were home to overwhelmingly white, native-born Christian populations. Both were plagued by bad soil. Both were distrustful of government. And, until 1950, both were solidly Republican. But sometime in the past half-century, the politics and the culture on either side of the Connecticut River began to diverge.

A soon-to-be-published paper by Harvard sociologist Jason Kaufman and graduate student Matthew Kaliner explores how as “New Hampshire’s place character retained a relatively constant trajectory ... Vermont’s place character changed in dramatic and unexpected ways that transformed it from a reactionary, conservative place to one at the vanguard of American cultural and political progressivism.”

New Hampshire strengthened its low taxation, small government niche, Kaufman and Kaliner find. But migrants to Vermont increasingly chose the state not for the usual economic reasons, namely jobs and living costs, but for its reputation for a progressive

lifestyle—a phenomenon the authors refer to as “idio-cultural migration.”

“Culturally speaking,” the authors write, “New Hampshire welcomed hunters, fishers, motorcyclists, and tax-evading Boston commuters. Vermont welcomed artists, skiers, hippies, back-to-the-landers, and college students.”

The authors also attribute some of Vermont’s progressive destiny to its disproportionate number of small “experimental” colleges, including Goddard (est. 1938), Bennington (1931), Marlboro (1946) [and] Windham (1951-1978),” which with the more established Middlebury (1800), Green Mountain (1834), and the University of Vermont (1791) “helped draw artists, radicals, writers, and students to Vermont, as well as build its reputation as a hospitable place for independent thought and leftist political activism.”

“The accomplishment of place is about more than amenities and institutions. It is about stereotypes, icons, myths, and the thousands of people willing to travel or move in pursuit of them,” write Kaufman and Kaliner.

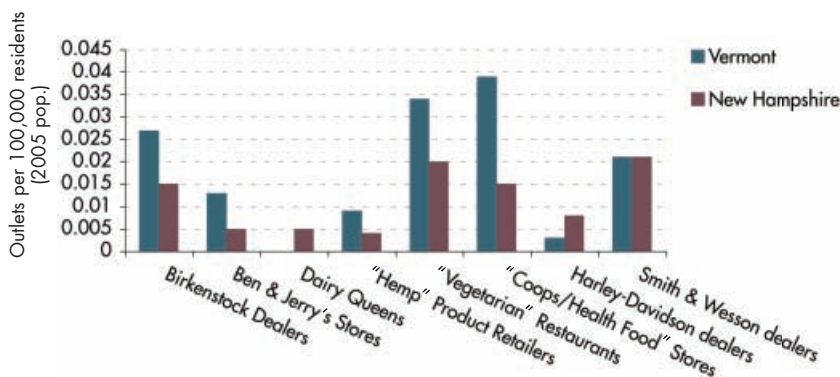
Fee-based

In Massachusetts, public college staff from custodians to provosts and their children share something in common with high school valedictorians, Hurricane Katrina survivors, veterans and people adopted through the Department of Social Services. They all receive “tuition waivers” in order to make college more affordable—which means they’re all losing buying power.

A tuition waiver once covered almost the full cost of attending a public college. But as Massachusetts skimped on state appropriations for its public campuses in the 1990s, the campuses tried to offset the lost revenue by raising fees, which stay on campus, rather than tuition, which goes right back to the state’s general fund. As a result, tuition for in-state undergraduates at state colleges has actually decreased by 29 percent (not adjusted for inflation) over the past 10 years, while fees increased by 152 percent. Now, the “curriculum fee” at the University of Massachusetts is much larger than actual tuition. But most groups that get tuition waivers do not have fees waived, and a full tuition waiver covers only 16 percent to 21 percent of the cost, according to a recent report by the Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts (PHENOM), comprising students, faculty, staff, alumni and others from the state’s public system.

“Through a clever ‘sleight of hand,’” says PHENOM, “state workers have been receiving a pay cut that limits their children and families from accessing public higher education. A one-time meaningful benefit has become empty for them and their children.”

Various Socio-Cultural Indicators, 2007



As part of their research, Kaufman and Kaliner compared “lifestyle-purveying outlets” in New Hampshire and Vermont. “Both states participate in various aspects of contemporary ‘new age’ or ‘eco-culture,’ but Vermont clearly dominates in this respect, comparatively speaking,” they conclude. “Similarly, both states are home to stereotypically ‘down home,’ traditional lifestyle outlets, such as gun shops and Harley dealers, and the percentages are even similar in the case of Smith & Wesson dealers, but overall, we submit, the culture or ‘feel’ of the states is different.”

Not So Grey

The Aspen Institute Center for Business Education conducts a biennial alternative ranking of business schools that focuses on the extent to which full-time MBA programs

integrate social and environmental stewardship into their curriculum.

The institute's Beyond Grey Pinstripes Global 100 assesses business programs in four areas: the number of courses with social and environmental content; teaching hours dedicated to social and environmental issues and the proportion of the student body taking such courses; how courses explicitly address the role of mainstream business in improving social and environmental conditions; and to what extent professors explore social and environmental issues in their research and articles.

Stanford University ranked first nationally in 2007. Among New England business programs, only Yale's cracked the top 10, ranking 9th, largely on the strength of its coursework in these areas. Other New England institutions in the Global 100 include: Brandeis's Heller School for Social Policy and Management (19th); Dartmouth's Tuck School (25th); Babson (31st); Simmons (32nd); Boston College (46th); Boston University (54th); Bentley (55th); MIT's Sloan School (71st); and the University of Vermont (78th).

The survey found that 63 percent of business programs required students to take a course dedicated to business and society issues in 2007, up from 34 percent six years earlier. But of the 112 schools surveyed this year, just 35 offered a special concentration or major that allows MBAs to focus on social and environmental issues faced by business. And only 5 percent of the faculty at the surveyed business schools published research on social or environmental topics.

Crime-fighting

A 5 percent increase in male high school graduation rates would produce an annual savings of almost \$5 billion in crime-related expenses, according to a study by the Washington D.C.-based Justice Policy Institute.

The study found that states that have higher levels of educational

attainment have below-average crime rates. And states with higher college enrollment rates have lower violent crime rates than do states with lower college enrollment rates.

* * * *

In several New England states, the black-to-white incarceration rate is well above the U.S. average, according to the Washington, D.C.-based Sentencing Project. Nationally, African-Americans are jailed at nearly six times the rate of whites. But in Vermont and Connecticut, blacks are sent to jails and prisons at 12 times the rate for whites. In New Hampshire and Rhode Island, blacks are jailed at more than nine times the rate for whites, and in Massachusetts and Maine at around eight times the rate.

The reasons for the high ratios vary. In Vermont, the high ratio may be attributed to a rate of black incarceration that is twice the national

average. In Connecticut and Rhode Island, black rates of incarceration are near or below the average, but white rates of incarceration are very low, thus the high black-to-white ratio.

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A Half Century of Tuition Savings

EVAN S. DOBELLE

This year, the New England Board of Higher Education is celebrating a half century of tuition savings and interstate cooperation through the New England Regional Student Program, known also as NEBHE's "Tuition Break" program.

Fifty years ago, the six New England states and their land-grant university campuses recognized the wisdom of cooperating to benefit residents of their states and avoid duplication of expensive academic programs.

The six public New England land-grant universities agreed to admit out-of-state New England residents in specialized programs of study and charge them the much lower in-state tuition rate. The first year of enrollment of "regional students" was 1958-59.

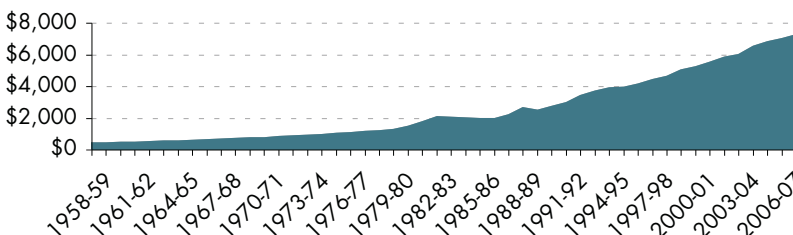
The specialized programs of study offered 50 years ago are going strong today. They include pharmacy, occupational therapy, hotel administration, textile chemistry, law, landscape architecture, turf management, food technology, forestry and marine biology.

Today all of New England's 81 public colleges and universities participate in the RSP, offering more than 700 undergraduate and graduate degree programs to regional students. The region's community colleges have been offering RSP-eligible programs since 1968 while the state colleges have participated since the 1970s.

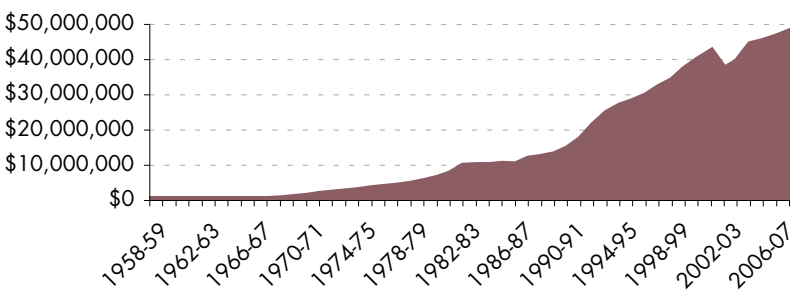
Most participating institutions now charge regional students a surcharge on top of the in-state tuition rate. Nevertheless, the tuition discount enjoyed by regional students has continued to grow significantly because of the growing gap between in-state and out-of-state tuition rates. The average tuition discount for an RSP student enrolled in 2006-07 was \$7,000.

50 Years of RSP Tuition Savings and Enrollment Growth

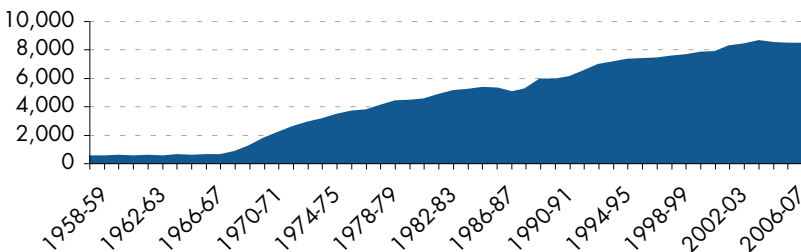
Average Tuition Savings Per RSP Student: 1958-2007



RSP Tuition Savings to New England Residents: 1958-2007



New England Residents Enrolled Through the RSP: 1958-2007



Source: 2007 NEBHE Regional Student Program Annual Report

Over the past 50 years, the RSP has provided tuition discounts to New England regional students on more than 200,000 annual tuition bills. In total, the RSP has provided an estimated \$740 million in tuition savings. When calculated in 2008 dollars, that equals \$1 billion worth of benefit to New England families.

Evan S. Dobelle is president and CEO of the New England Board of Higher Education and publisher of THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION. Email: edobelle@nebhe.org.

It's 2008...

I must only learn in certain ways, and only between 8 am and 3pm, 5 days a week, until I am 18...

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At the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, we realize the need to find dynamic new ways to better educate our citizens. That is why we start the new year by venturing down an important, strategic path.

As our focus on underserved learners continues, we will begin to build knowledge about how to dramatically improve educational opportunities and experiences. We are hopeful this will lead us to a re-examination of long-held assumptions about how, when, where and by whom students are educated. We are excited to work with New England education, philanthropic, business and community-based organization leaders and policymakers to grow an approach that will provide the extraordinary results necessary in the 21st century.

For more information on our program areas, grantmaking, and partnership opportunities, visit www.nmefdn.org.



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A Strategy for Cooperation

MARY R. CATHCART



I have been deeply honored to chair the New England Board of Higher Education as it reached a variety of important milestones including its 50th anniversary and the 20th anniversary of this journal. This year, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of NEBHE's tuition-saving Regional Student Program during our New England Higher Education Excellence Awards dinner on March 14 in Boston and with special events in all six states.

These milestones inevitably make us think about the future. Since NEBHE's founding in 1955, technologies have transformed our workplaces, schools and homes and given rise to new industries and occupations. Postsecondary education has become a prerequisite to economic prosperity, social mobility and civic engagement. More than ever before, New England's economy and quality of life depend on the quality and diversity of the region's higher education resources—and on expanding college access and success for all residents.

What does that mean for NEBHE?

In pursuit of its mission, NEBHE has identified three core functions. One is "access & success." NEBHE programs such as the College Ready New England initiative aim to increase educational achievement, access and attainment—particularly among underrepresented populations.

Another NEBHE core function is "cost savings & affordability." NEBHE programs and services such as the Regional Student Program, recently re-branded as the "Tuition Break" program, increase cost savings for New England residents and resource sharing in higher education.

The third core function is "policy leadership." By publishing *THE NEW*

ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION and convening conferences on important issues, NEBHE promotes dialogue, policy research and best practices related to education and the New England economy.

Over the next few years, NEBHE plans to refine and enhance these core functions.

NEBHE will work with states and education leaders at all levels to bridge the gap between K-12 and postsecondary education and to more fully define "college and career readiness." NEBHE will expand the identification, sharing and promotion of best practices and cutting-edge policy innovations from within the six New England states and nationally and provide data, measurements and key indicators of the region's outcome and progress in expanding its educated workforce. And we'll promote a regional policy dialogue on issues of education, the workforce and economic competitiveness, engaging leaders of business, education and government in pursuing policy innovations aimed at national and international leadership.

NEBHE will also expand the Regional Student Program's enrollment, offerings and visibility through additional marketing and recruitment efforts and explore opportunities to expand cost-saving programs and collaboratives that can benefit participating states, institutions and students.

Having recently re-branded its journal CONNECTION as *THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION*, NEBHE plans to expand its readership among decision-makers, opinion leaders, educators, consumers and advocates both regionally and nationally, and develop digital and

interactive means for disseminating the journal and other NEBHE policy resources. *NEJHE's Newslink* is already attracting interest among decision-makers who want the latest info on higher ed delivered to their email inbox. NEBHE will also look to expand online resources related to college readiness, postsecondary opportunities, pathways to high-demand careers, adult education and online learning.

NEBHE will continue to be a vital convener of regional forums designed to address issues of concern in the six states. I was particularly pleased that NEBHE was able to bring together hundreds of educators from New England and around the world in Providence in 2006 to discuss ways to achieve global economic success and foster cross-cultural understanding through international higher education. More recently, NEBHE's New England Leadership Summit on College Readiness and Success brought together participants from each New England state to examine what the six states have learned.

I am confident that NEBHE and its cadre of dedicated delegates will remain true to the commitment of the six New England governors who shared a dream of working together to bolster New England's higher education leadership.

Mary R. Cathcart is chair of the New England Board of Higher Education. She is a senior policy associate at the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center and former four-term Maine state senator. Email: maryorono@verizon.net.



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Differentiate or Die

Colleges need a clear niche to thrive in the coming demographic crisis

TY J. HANDY

New England higher education is about to experience a decade-long demographic crisis unlike anything in its history. While the crisis will significantly affect all six New England States, it will be most acute in the three northern states, as the competition for qualified high school graduates begins to intensify.

In Vermont, for example, Gov. Jim Douglas has predicted that the number of high school graduates will decline by as much as 20 percent over the next decade, and figures from the state Department of Education back up his warning. Specifically, Vermont schools enrolled 7,599 high school seniors in 2006, while there are only 6,205 first-graders in the “pipeline” to replace them, according to state data. That suggests a precipitous decline of more than 18 percent in the size of Vermont’s graduating high school cohort 11 years from now.

Figure 1 provides this “pipeline” comparison for all six New England states using 2006 enrollment figures for grades twelve, nine and one. In some states, the numbers suggest a slight enrollment increase until 2010, after which the bottom begins to fall out. The decline is most severe in Maine, followed by Vermont, New Hampshire and, to a lesser degree, Rhode Island.

Figure 1: Cohorts of K-12 Students in the Pipeline in 2006, by State

State	Grade Level			Projected % Change in Graduating Cohort Size
	12th	9th	1st	
Conn.	39,895	48,498	42,665	+9%
Mass.	67,619	82,320	71,497	+6%
Maine	18,024	19,628	14,393	-20%
N.H.	17,543	20,128	15,765	-10%
R.I.	10,836	13,935	10,429	-4%
Vt.	7,599	8,164	6,205	-18%

The statistics may distort the full gravity of the situation, however, as they fail to take into account high school dropout rates, which range between 3.8 percent in Massachusetts and 1.3 percent in Rhode Island. Moreover, school-aged population declines aren’t New England’s only demographic problem. Of equal concern is the “out-migration” of younger

New England adults. New England’s productive young people—single, college-educated individuals between the ages of 25 and 39—are leaving the region at an alarming rate. In Maine, for example, there was a net out-migration of 1,706 people in this age bracket between 1995 and 2000, according to Census data. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2: High School Dropouts, Net Migration and Revised Graduating Cohort Projections, by State

State	Dropout Rate	Net Migration Total	Revised % Change in Graduating Cohort Size
Conn.	1.8%	- 6,315	+4%
Mass.	3.8%	- 1,062	+2%
Maine	2.7%	- 1,706	-23%
N.H.	3.1%	- 3,154	-12%
R.I.	1.3%	- 4,225	-7%
Vt.	2.9%	- 2,252	-23%

When adjusted for both dropouts and net migration out of New England, the change in cohort size looks even worse. For example, the predicted decline in high school graduating cohorts in Maine is actually more than 23 percent—three percentage points higher than the numbers projected in Figure 1.

All this leads to one conclusion: barring a dramatic improvement in our demographic profile, the New England states—and our colleges and universities—will soon be competing aggressively for a dwindling number of prospective students. Research shows that the vast majority of high school graduates who attend college in their home state tend also to stay and work in that state upon graduation. In Vermont, for example, the percentage of students who attend a Vermont public college and then leave the state to work elsewhere is just 3 percent. Conversely, students who come from out-of-state to attend college are much more likely to leave following graduation. National data puts this percentage at 90 percent. So each state’s future tax base—and its economic future—is inextricably linked to keeping its youth at home for college.

Governors in all six New England states are talking about the need to address this looming problem. The governors of Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont have each put forward proposals aimed at stopping the “brain drain” using targeted scholarship money for students who stay in-state. Additionally,

five states (Vermont excepted) are increasing higher education capital expenditures to provide public colleges with facilities that will attract and retain students. New Hampshire invested more than \$150 million in its public colleges last year, while Massachusetts is proposing to spend \$2 billion over the next 10 years.

Nationwide, New England higher education is held in very high regard. Institutions that can capitalize on that generic reputation should.

But it will take more than just capital improvements to attract students. Colleges and universities will also need to target specific markets over the next decade. To borrow a phrase from a basic marketing text, “differentiation” will be the name of the game. Institutions that employ a strategy that makes them look like “all things to all people” are likely to struggle to maintain enrollments. Those that enjoy—or can carve out—a unique niche will be in the best position to withstand the coming crisis. Each institution will have to determine its own focus, and this focus may be an internal or external strength. College A, for example, may emphasize its unique or particularly attractive location, while College B may focus its recruitment on a programmatic strength such as sustainable practices, a specific art program or even athletic success. Schools that can closely connect their degree programs to job opportunities in New England will also have a distinct advantage. Traditionally, K-12 teaching jobs have been very attractive to college students wanting to stay in New England. As K-12 enrollments decline, however, we might see teacher education programs suffer. Students wishing to stay nearer to home will likely select majors that offer more local promise. College leaders need to ask: What are those majors? Do we offer them?

All colleges should evaluate the communities from which their students are coming to determine what it is that makes their college attractive to that market and seek to replicate it in other promising ones. At the same time, colleges should not overlook the opportunity to focus on out-of-New England markets. Nationwide, New England higher education is held in very high regard. Institutions that can capitalize on that generic reputation should.

At my college, Vermont Technical College, we know the looming demographic crisis will place a market premium on students who graduate with technical workplace skills. So a logical and historical niche already exists for the college. The challenge is to make

this niche appeal to more students who are selecting college majors. To ward off enrollment pressure expected in the near future, Vermont Tech is taking a three-pronged approach to continuing its growth. First, it is using a “pull” strategy by expanding its bachelor’s degree offerings in an effort to retain students for four years, rather than just two. In the past two years, the number of juniors and seniors at Vermont Tech has risen by 50 percent. For every additional junior the college retains, it can enroll one fewer freshman and still maintain a stable enrollment.

The second strategy is gender diversification. Vermont Tech’s main campus has seen its percentage of female students increase from 20 percent to 27 percent this fall alone. This kind of diversification adds to the quality of student life, aids in the recruitment of new students and creates positive perceptions among the school’s male and female students.

Finally, the college is focusing recruitment efforts on communities where it has a track record of success. These are both in-state and out-of-state communities where the college has a concentration of alumni, has recruited student athletes who have generated local press coverage or where excellent school counselor relationships and awareness of Vermont Tech exist. The assumption is that deeper penetration into markets where the College is already successful is likely to bear more fruit—rather than focusing new resources in new markets. That said, the College is closely monitoring enrollment data and will shift resources as new opportunities show promise.

“Differentiation” will be the name of the game. Institutions that employ a strategy that makes them look like “all things to all people” are likely to struggle to maintain enrollments.

Ultimately, the impact of the coming demographic decline can be partially, if not fully, mitigated by the proactive actions of state and university leadership. There are two more years to get plans finalized and activated before the demographic forecasts become reality. The key is for institutions to return to marketing fundamentals and to focus on product differentiation and market penetration. The college that positions itself uniquely, relative to other New England schools, will be the college that thrives in the years ahead.

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Pulling Rank

A Plan to Help Students with College Choice in an Age of Rankings

LLOYD THACKER

“If I do not get into a top-ranked college, I’ll have to go to a public university. I’ll be stupid.”

—A student complaining to her guidance counselor.

“He indicated that he has filled out the U.S. News survey in the past, but now felt rather ashamed of doing that and wasn’t intending to do it in the future.”

—Account of college president’s epiphany after realizing the magazine’s survey accounts for 25 percent of a college’s score.

“So, you are only a fourteen.”

—A disappointed mother conflating her son’s value with the top *U.S. News & World Report* ranking of college his counselor predicts will admit him.

“We are all lying in order to improve our rank.”

—Admissions dean of highly ranked college.

It doesn’t take keen auditory skill or impressive educational pedigree to hear the frustration, twisted cynicism and outrage being generated by the *U.S. News and World Report*-fueled transformation of college admissions. The voices of discontent resound loudly in a growing national chorus, indicting both the rankings industry and the academy for their collusion in commercializing how students select and are selected by colleges. Stoked by the attendant rise of billion-dollar industries peddling test preparation, enrollment management, independent college counseling and the rankings themselves, the marketplace of college admissions has emerged and gained influence beyond its educational jurisdiction. Everyone, even the profiteers, knows there is something wrong. The good news is educators are gathering in the wings, rehearsing cooperation, feeling the courage of their stated convictions and preparing to reclaim the stage with a demonstration of the character of the academy.

Criticisms about college rankings have only grown over the years. Among the charges:

- Rankings imply a degree of precision and authority that is not supported by educational data.
- They distort the way education is perceived and pursued among K-12 educators, families, schools, colleges and trustees.
- They do not measure what matters in education: learning.
- The numbers on which they’re based are often

inaccurate. There is no enforced system of accountability in the information colleges report. Some colleges have omitted SAT scores of development cases, legacies and athletes and counted partial applications as applications to inflate their scores.

- They have contributed to an unhealthy environment of distrust, desire and deceit, fueled a destructive level of competition to be selective and to be selected, and fostered behavior (including resource allocation) that is compromising educational purposes and integrity.

In the face of such criticism, scant evidence has been offered that rankings have improved decision-making by students or by colleges, or contributed to education. In fact, abundant evidence is to the contrary. Multiple studies document that what we’ve gained are: more applications than ever before, because rankings reward colleges for selectivity—receiving and rejecting large numbers of applications; more dropouts, because students are often lured to colleges with misinformation and front-loaded financial aid packages; more stratification, more anxiety and frustration; more money being transferred from serving the most needy to luring the most desirable students; more treating students like customers and education like a product; and finally, more high performance but less engaged learning, because standardized test scores help determine rank, and rank is a proxy for student success. Perhaps most troubling, many trustees of colleges seem to be particularly impressed by rankings. College presidents report that trustees are unreasonably guided by the rankings as measures of institutional quality. Some even establish improving college rank as a presidential responsibility.

The ranksters’ success in selling the public a scorecard for judging institutions has been seen as a market response to education’s failure to fulfill its own responsibility. But what is to explain the academy’s

willingness to cooperate by “ranksteering,” driving so recklessly under the rankings’ influence?

Too often, a college’s stance on the rankings is determined by where it stands in the rankings. Still, some college leaders are responding to the rankings with befuddlement, discomfort and, increasingly, with action. *U.S. News* is feeling the heat of a growing movement to shake loose the influence of the rankings.

The Education Conservancy is helping shape this movement by describing the growing hunger for integrity in admissions among families, students and schools and by facilitating appropriate responses by those uniquely equipped to do so: colleges.

Our research reveals a deep level of cynicism among high school students about the admissions practices that are seen to serve institutional rank-mongering rather than the interests of students and education. These practices include encouraging everyone to apply, overemphasizing the SAT, overselling a college as being good for everyone and distributing free online applications that are partially filled in. We have engaged groups of parents, deans, presidents and trustees by asking questions about the relationship between admissions activities and educational values. While all recognize there is tremendous public pressure to go to the “one right college” and the “one right college” is the one that is the most highly ranked, all admit that their own personal experiences tell them that what is most important in education and in life is the attitude and skills a student brings to the learning experience; what you do in college matters much more than where you go to college. We have organized a boycott against *U.S. News* rankings in an effort to find a more meaningful alternative.

More than 100 professionals representing a range of positions and institutions joined us at Yale University in September 2007 for a meeting, titled “Beyond Ranking: Responding to the Call for Useful Information.” There, we discussed the prospect of developing a robust web-based system of information and guidance to better help students and families with college selection—an interactive educational tool that would draw upon current efforts to develop templates of information. With initial support from some of the colleges represented at the Yale meeting, the Education Conservancy is moving forward to solicit additional funding and plans to build a prototype of this system within a year.

Our campaign is gaining momentum. We are certain that the commercialization of college admissions fueled by the rankings has weighted “college choice” with too much gravity for both students and for the colleges themselves. Such delusion may be part of the historical ebb and flow between educational values and workplace forces, but the educational tide is on its way back in. As we work with educators (especially college admissions officials) to develop a better way for students and families to consider their college choices, we will follow a few principles:

- The *market* has a place in college admissions, but it must be kept in its place. Many questions help us

calibrate this relationship: To what extent can market mechanisms determine the values of liberal education? Should we treat students as customers; is the student always right? How far can we go in serving the bottom line before the institution we are serving loses its soul?

- We can all ask educationally based questions to guide admissions practices and help the admissions profession push back against the industries that would compromise education in order to win the rankings game.

- Colleges have more to gain by cooperating according to their common public interest than they do by competing according to differences that are overstated by purveyors of rankings. Various groups of colleges have successfully united to say no to the rankings, limit or eliminate standardized testing and articulate the value of common characteristics, such as liberal arts education, professional programs, size, etc. We have a classic prisoner’s dilemma—cooperation will be essential if we are to make progress.

- Colleges can do a better job acting like educational institutions by continuously trying to assess and improve the amount of learning that takes place. Yet the SAT scores and institutional selectivity and reputation emphasized by college rankings tell us nothing about the amount of learning that goes on at a given campus. Instruments such as the National Survey of Student Engagement and the College Learning Assessment do a much better job by describing college activities and achievements associated with learning.

- Colleges can use the admissions arena to demonstrate educational integrity and to yield real institutional benefits. All admissions activities should be reviewed for their educational merit and evaluated against the mission and values of the college. Admissions representatives should be rewarded based on how well they educate, not how much they sell. By closing their wide-mouthed-funnel approach to always luring more (more prospects, more inquiries, more candidates), colleges can focus on identifying institutional values and strengths, developing resonant messages and practicing admissions as education. Their pitch should be, “This is what we have and why you may be interested” as opposed to “What do you want, we have it.” Education matters, not sales.

- We would be wise to heed Einstein’s comment, “Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.” We must not become so obsessed with measurables that we lose sight of the essentials characteristics of “studenthood”—curiosity, imagination, confidence, risk-taking, passion, sense of discovery, tolerance for ambiguity.

Education is the crucible of hope. But the rankings have infused a cynical spin on education. How can we expect our students to be full of hope if our admission practices are not?

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World-Class Care

Boston Welcome Back Center Puts Internationally Educated Nurses Back To Work

MARY L. FIFIELD

By the time you have finished reading this page, there will be even fewer nurses to care for you and your family, no matter where you live.

Bunker Hill Community College, in partnership with Roxbury and Massachusetts Bay Community Colleges and the University of Massachusetts Boston are tackling the national nursing shortage “one nurse at a time.”

We borrowed a simple idea from California, and there’s room for hundreds of other colleges and universities to pitch in: Help professional nurses who are from other countries and living here in the United States become licensed to practice nursing here. We call our program “Welcome Back,” because we are welcoming these professionals, many of whom have been stuck in low-wage jobs, back to their profession. New England is home to thousands of foreign-trained nurses who don’t know how to re-enter their profession in the United States.

In two years, the Boston Welcome Back Center has helped 47 internationally educated nurses from 29 different countries obtain licenses and return to work. The program is working with more than 400 nurses from 72 countries who are legal residents of the United States. While all were nurses in their own countries, the steps required to obtain their United States licenses, including learning English in some cases as well as miles of bureaucratic red tape, are time-consuming. An internationally educated nurse who enrolls in the Welcome Back program full-time could be licensed and working in a hospital or a clinic in as little as a year. Most, however, work full- or part-time jobs—and may need two years or more to complete the program on a part-time basis. Either way, the program puts experienced nurses to work in less time than training new nurses; the fundamental nursing credential, an R.N., takes two years of full-time study.

The Boston Welcome Back Center is a workforce development program. Staff members act as case managers helping each participant over three major hurdles to gain a nursing license in the United States. The first, credential validation, can be the most difficult as it requires getting official transcripts from nurses’ home countries. English competency must be at the level of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The final step is the National Council Licensure Examination. No two Welcome Back participants face the same issues. The Center and its partners refer nurses

to a network of agencies, community organizations and churches to help each participant find the most convenient, least expensive services needed to clear the hurdles.

Participants were highly educated and experienced nurses in their homelands. Many say they want to return to their profession because nursing is their life. But multiple family and financial needs prevent most from focusing full-time on relicensing. Many Welcome Back nurses are political refugees. Others left war zones where they lost family members and friends. Using a client-centered case management approach, Welcome Back helps them find suitable English-as-a-Second Language classes and any remediation needed to restart their lives beyond nursing.

Many Welcome Back students received nursing education that varies from ours in the United States or practiced in places where the role of the nurse is different, so part of the training is to prepare them for the nature of U.S. nursing work. For example, U.S. nurses often have a level of autonomy in decision-making. Nurses from some other countries say they are often limited to following a doctor’s explicit orders. Welcome Back helps these students understand how U.S. nurses can often take the initiative in care. Or a Welcome Back participant from a developing country may have been the primary health care provider around the clock, seven days a week, for communities with hundreds and even thousands of families. One eight-hour shift a day within a prescribed discipline, such as cardiac care or pediatrics, as at most U.S. jobs, constitutes a very different work environment. At the same time, some Welcome Back students bring experiences that can supplement the usual U.S. services. One current program participant who came to the United States under political asylum from Sierra Leone has extensive experience with the psychological and social rehabilitation of soldiers and families dealing with the trauma of war.

Massachusetts alone needs an estimated 5,000 nurses, and the shortage is deepening. Nurses are retiring and quitting faster than new nurses can be trained. The demand has pushed some salaries to \$75,000 per year for an experienced nurse, more than what a nursing instructor earns. The small number of nurses with master’s degrees who are available and willing to teach exacerbates the overall shortage. The shortage is worsening. Everyone’s healthcare costs will rise; patient care will suffer.

There is no magic solution. The usual stopgap measures won’t work. Signing bonuses for nurses at hospitals

take a nurse away from somewhere else. Importing nurses through immigration policy takes nurses away from another country and stifles creation of U.S. jobs. In addition, immigration policies to encourage nurses to come to the United States have not worked well. Increasing salaries for nurses who teach is another often-floated solution. However, funding to double salaries for nursing professors creates havoc within faculty ranks. Hospitals and clinics do not have a miracle cure for the hectic and stressful work conditions that the shortage causes. If healthcare in the United States is an industry, prices will drive care away from those who can't pay until someone has a better idea. If healthcare is a public good and service, then the public sector, the government, should fund faculty salaries. This debate has been going on for years.

A key issue, mostly ignored now, is that neither internationally educated nurses nor healthcare employers know how to bring foreign-trained nurses into the nursing profession here in the U.S. More than 80 percent of Welcome Back enrollment is word of mouth. The stories are compelling.

When Teresa Samsel, a Welcome Back alumna, arrived from Poland 10 years ago, she could find work only as a clinical assistant, in a job that paid \$10 an hour. "People were waiting for care. They needed simple things like vitamin shots, which I knew how to do but I

couldn't because I didn't have a license," she said.

What's worse, no one could tell her how to rejoin the nursing profession. "I was ready to go to school and get the degree all over again," she said. By chance, a friend saw a newspaper ad for the BHCC Welcome Back Center. Samsel is now a nurse again. "And I'm earning a lot more than \$10 an hour," she said.

Melanie Matthews arrived trained from Switzerland three years ago. "It's very hard to figure out what you have to do to qualify. Even at hospitals, they tell you that you can have a job when you get your license, but no one could tell me how to get the license," she said. "I was getting pretty desperate by the time I found out about the Center." She is back at the work she loves and has doubled her salary. At the Welcome Back Center, we have heard hundreds of these sad stories. Fortunately, for Welcome Back participants, their stories become a distant memory, replaced with the satisfaction of returning to fulfilling jobs.

In nursing today, licensing internationally educated nurses to practice in the United States does not take potential jobs from anyone. We need more nurses than nursing schools can graduate.

Moreover, as New England's population becomes more culturally diverse, Welcome Back graduates are adding their own cultural literacy and sensitivities to care in hospitals and clinics. Especially in our cities,

medical professionals speaking only English struggle to help patients who do not speak English. Internationally educated nurses bring with them the bonus of understanding many languages, values and beliefs, but also must meet a high standard for speaking English under licensure requirements.

The nursing shortage has no single simple solution. Educators and policymakers can perhaps take a page from ancient advice to doctors faced with a difficult problem: First, do no harm. Let's recognize the value-added by assisting internationally educated nurses to obtain licensure here. This will put thousands of qualified professionals back to work where they belong—in our hospitals and clinics. Until a solution to the whole shortage emerges, we can change the world, one nurse at a time.

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Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

A Real-World Antidote to the Standards and Testing Regime

NICHOLAS M. MASSA

In 2005, a New Jersey man was arrested for shining a green laser pointer at an airplane on approach to Teterboro Airport, 12 miles west of midtown Manhattan, temporarily blinding the pilot. The man maintains he is innocent. You and your team of three other laser technology students are tasked with determining whether the man is innocent or guilty. Make your case.

Unlike traditional lecture-based instruction, where information is passively transferred from instructor to student, PBL students are active participants in their own learning, thrust into unknown learning situations where the parameters of the problem may not be well-defined and the task at hand ambiguous—just like in the real world.

Research shows PBL provides students with skills that are critical for lifelong learning, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork and the ability to apply their knowledge to new situations. Given the demands of the new global innovation economy for creative, teamwork-oriented problem-solvers capable of adapting to the ever-changing needs of business and industry, PBL may very well be the antidote to the prevalent standards and testing regime.

Developed in the 1970s for use in medical school education, PBL has since been adopted in other disciplines including business, education, law, nursing and engineering. PBL is a learner-centered rather than an instructor-centered approach, in which the problem situation drives the learning.

PBL is consistent with the recommendations outlined by John Bransford and his colleagues in their seminal publication, “How People Learn.” Based on more than three decades of research on effective educational principles and practices, Bransford *et al.* recommend that to be effective, educators must first draw out and engage students’ preconceptions regarding their understanding about how the world works. Second, in order for students to develop competence in a particular subject area, they must develop a deep foundation of factual knowledge, understand that knowledge in the context of a conceptual framework and organize it in a way that facilitates retrieval and application. Finally, instruction must facilitate the development of students’ metacognitive skills; skills needed to take responsibility for planning, monitoring and evaluating their own learning. With PBL, each of these steps is addressed through engagement in the problem-solving process.

PBL involves four basic stages: *problem analysis*, *self-directed learning*, *brainstorming* and *solution testing*. The process begins with students being presented with an authentic problem to be solved. The problem may be posed by an industry or business partner, or fabricated by an instructor based on real-world events and data. In either case, the first step in the process is *problem analysis*, in which teams of four to eight students collaboratively analyze and frame the problem. This process involves dissecting the problem to identify what is known, what is unknown, situational constraints and a clear understanding of the desired outcome. By identifying these factors, students learn how to frame the problem and develop a plan for action. At this point, preliminary hypotheses may also be developed to help guide the learning process.

The students gather around a whiteboard to analyze the problem. Given what they know about laser pointers, they are skeptical as to whether light from a laser pointer is bright enough to reach an airplane at such a distance, let alone penetrate the cockpit window and blind a pilot. They agree that to solve the problem, certain questions must be answered: How far away was the plane? How powerful was the laser? What were the weather conditions? How much laser light is required to blind a person? How much, if any, laser light entered the cockpit and how long must the pilot be exposed to the laser light to be temporarily blinded? To answer these questions, there is much they need to learn about the properties of laser light, laser safety and basic optics. They need a plan for action.

Self-directed learning involves students taking responsibility for acquiring the knowledge and skills identified as needed in the problem analysis phase. Self-directed learning involves setting specific learning goals, identifying the necessary resources (including human resources) to solve the problem, monitoring comprehension of the requisite knowledge and skills being acquired and evaluating the extent to which the newly acquired knowledge and skills apply in solving the problem at hand. One must be able to positively respond to the question, “Have I acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to solve the problem?”

Given the time constraints imposed by their instructor, the team decides to divvy up the learning tasks. They set a timeline and agree to reconvene in a week to report on what they have learned. Each team member is responsible for acquiring the knowledge required to evaluate a specific aspect of the problem and then sharing their newly acquired knowledge with the others to make the most effective use of their time and resources.

During the *brainstorming* stage, students reconvene to discuss what they have learned in the self-directed learning phase in hopes of converging on a possible solution to the problem. Individual contributions are presented without criticism or judgment. By expressing ideas and listening to what others say, students are able to gauge their own level of knowledge, absorb new information, increase their levels of understanding and awareness, and converge on a solution that represents the collective knowledge of the group. Brainstorming is the cornerstone of collaborative learning.

A week later, the students reconvene to share what they have learned with the other team members and brainstorm possible solutions. Their instructor is present to help guide the process and provide additional information if needed. After careful analysis and discussion, the team agrees that it is unlikely that the laser had enough power to penetrate the cockpit window long enough to blind the pilot under the given circumstances. To be sure, however, they decide to validate their solution by setting up a test to simulate the problem situation.

The final stage in the problem solving process is *solution testing*. Once a tentative solution has been agreed upon by the group, it must be evaluated to determine if it satisfies the desired outcome criteria established in the problem analysis phase. At this point, a formal test and evaluation procedure is developed with performance benchmarks. If the solution satisfies the desired outcome criteria and benchmarks, a formal presentation of the solution is presented in which peer review is used to validate the problem solution. If the problem solution does not meet the desired outcome criteria or performance benchmarks, the problem-solving process is repeated until an acceptable solution is reached.

Using what they have learned about how a laser spreads out after traveling a certain distance, how much light might be reflected by the cockpit window and how much laser light power is required to temporarily blind someone, the students design a test plan for validating their solution. They shine a green laser pointer onto a light detector mounted behind the windshield of car parked at a distance estimated to be the same as that of the approaching aircraft and

measure the laser's power. They repeat the experiment several times at varying distances to obtain a range of values. They now have their answer. The results are ready to be presented to the class for peer review.

The PBL process may be repeated several times to solve a single problem. During this process, an instructor or tutor serves as a facilitator, guiding the students as they seek out resources and providing additional information upon request, which may include direct instruction. In summary, the nature of what is learned is dictated by the problem situation, and the responsibility for acquiring the knowledge and skills required to solve the problem is placed on the student.

Exactly how PBL is implemented depends on the context in which learning is to take place and the preparedness of the student. In its purist form, PBL involves presenting students with an authentic problem *prior* to any instruction or preparation. The idea is to use the problem to introduce the concepts and problem-solving skills necessary to solve the problem. Learning occurs in a small group facilitated by a tutor. Since its introduction in medical education at McMaster University in the 1970s, a number of adaptations have been developed.

For example, the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) is developing a series of multimedia-based PBL instructional materials focused on photonics through the National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded *Photon PBL* project. Institutional modules, called *PBL challenges*, developed in partnership with the photonics industry and university research labs present authentic real-world photonics problems in the context in which they were developed. Examples of challenges posed to students include developing a safe method for testing high-powered lasers at maximum power unattended for a 100-hour period, evaluating optical filters appropriate for a UV photolithography system used to fabricate DNA microchips for genetic engineering research, and the use of high-powered lasers for cleanly and accurately stripping fine wires needed for diabetes testing devices. "The students believe that they learned a great deal more by solving a real-world problem than just by listening to a lecture or just reading about it," says Gary Beasley, an engineering technology faculty member at Central Carolina Community College using the Photon PBL instructional materials.

PBL is not another educational fad. It has been tried and tested, and it makes sense. If education institutions are to produce graduates capable of solving real-world problems, PBL is a no-brainer.

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Adult Education: From a Terminal Degree to Lifelong Learning

NICHOLAS C. DONOHUE

In the conversation about underserved populations in New England higher education often revolves around “school-aged” students of color and students from low-income families. This is understandable; after all, these are the fastest growing populations in the region.

Adults, on the other hand, are too often left out of that conversation, though they too are underserved and overlooked. Adult Basic Education (ABE) students in New England are often relegated to peripheral discussions of technical training or achievement of a General Equivalency Degree or GED. The truth is, our region’s adult learners are an increasingly important demographic, not only to our higher education institutions, but to our workforce and our communities.

It has been more than 40 years since Congress passed the Adult Education Act, creating programs to help Americans over age 18 learn to read and write, and nearly 20 years since that act was repealed in favor of the 1998 Workforce Investment Act, combining adult education with federal training and employment programs. Despite the noble intentions of the former and the presumed practicality of the latter, we have undervalued the notion of adult education. Too many people, particularly in higher education, have either focused on the “Basic” in Adult Basic Education, as if a high school equivalency certificate is a “terminal degree”—or they’ve seen ABE as something directly related to specific workforce training.

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation’s seven-year-old New England ABE-to-College Transition Project prepares adults throughout New England who have earned a GED or External Diploma Program (EDP) certificate to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and, by doing so, improve their lives and their families’ lives. Currently, the New England ABE-to-College Transition Project is being implemented in 25 adult education programs that are partnering with more than 40 postsecondary institutions in the region.

The ABE-to-College Transition Project helps adults bridge the gap between high school equivalency and college. The program helps students prepare academically, but also helps them navigate the culture of higher education, from securing student aid to choosing courses. The program has been so positive that the Maine Legislature, for one, has adopted the model for its own ABE-College transition programs.

Nurturing a successful program to scale like this proves it’s possible to shift the paradigm that currently defines when adults are done with education—and we must shift that paradigm further.

The New England Council’s initiative on the region’s aging workforce reports somewhat grimly that Maine possesses the oldest workforce in the country; one in three Mainers will be 55 or older by 2015. New Hampshire’s over-65 population is projected to grow by 38 percent by 2015. Meanwhile, University of New Hampshire research shows that New England’s population of younger workers, ages 25 to 34, has declined by 25 percent since 1990, as it has become increasingly expensive to live in the region.

These circumstances, combined with growing economic competition from around the globe, point to the need for more educated workers, and the need to rethink when education ends for our citizens.

If we are to be more diligent in educating adults, one thing we must address is the prohibitive barrier of higher education costs. Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick’s call for *free* community colleges is promising on this front, because the two-year public colleges have been the traditional options for adults in higher education. But the cost dilemma is more complex for many adult learners, since time spent in school is time spent away from work. Some employers, like United Technologies Corp., have provided employees with time off to earn degrees. More of these types of innovative programs should be developed if we are going to reap the full potential benefits of adult education.

Cost and time are not the only barriers facing adult students. We must also remove the stigma attached to adult education and the notion that adults who didn’t persist in education the “normal way” somehow “failed” and must now play “catch up.” These learners didn’t fail in our system; our system failed them, and the usual social constructs surrounding age and education continue to work against them.

We need to seriously re-think what we want to accomplish in terms of educating our adult learners. We need a way to formalize this process for our adult students in a way that measures success according to various outcomes. Success in one instance may be earning a bachelor’s degree; in another, it may be becoming computer literate. One adult learner may be focused on attaining analytical skills; for another, gaining communication skills may be more important.

We must review our basic assumptions about how we deliver education opportunities to adults and what

standards drive these opportunities. Re-creating a rigid, one-size-fits-all classroom model that did not work the first time around for many of these adults is not the solution. We must become better at learning how adults engage and persist with learning opportunities. This may suggest a need to increase the types of opportunities to which access is being promoted. For example, learners expand their knowledge within the context of what they already know. This is especially true for adult learners. Thus, applied learning opportunities should take into account the variety of life experiences and expertise that adults bring to the new learning experience.

We may also learn important lessons from for-profit institutions. These proprietary colleges have seen enrollment among adult learners explode because they use innovative learning technologies and offer workplace-relevant courses at convenient times and places for working people. We should at least explore some market-based approaches that for-profits have adopted, such as giving learner-consumers a role in determining when and how courses are delivered.

In the short term, we should focus on duplicating what we have seen to work not only in providing individual adults with needed skills but also in fostering institutional and societal acceptance of the very idea of lifelong learning. New England states can tap the National College Transition Network for promising practices in ABE-to-college transition programs to increase the number of adults who attain higher education degrees. The region's higher education institutions—two- and four-year, private and especially public—will need to increase their flexibility on credits, costs and when and where students are engaged in order to remove barriers from students who are working toward degrees while balancing work and raising families.

We can dramatically increase the number of college educated citizens who live in our region. But in order to do so, we must fully embrace adult learners in ways that may challenge our current assumptions and that reflect their integral role in the future of New England.

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FOLLOW UP:

Yes, a Catholic College Can Exist

JAMES F. KEENAN, S.J.

In his essay, "Can a Catholic College Exist Today?" the new Assumption College President Francesco C. Cesareo offers a manifesto of his way of governing a Catholic institution "in the midst of pluralism" (*THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION*, Fall 2007). Cesareo extols adherence to a single Catholic intellectual tradition and insists that Catholic colleges neither condone nor endorse behavior that is contrary to the church's moral teachings.

As a professor of Theological Ethics at a large Catholic and Jesuit University, I would like to offer a different perspective. In January 2006, I and another Jesuit priest, Gregory Kalscheur, S.J., assistant professor at the Boston College Law School, were asked to chair a committee of the "Church in the Twenty-First Century Project." The Church 21 project had been launched by BC's president, Father William Leahy, S.J., in the wake of the abuse scandal that rocked the church in the United States and the local church of Boston in particular.

The committee—made up of diverse faculty and administrators at BC, including the vice president for mission and identity, the dean of the Law School and

the chair of the Theology Department—was to reflect on how BC's Catholic identity pertained to the university as a whole.

BC is evidently Catholic in many ways. Yet when this Catholic identity was cited university-wide, it was often occasioned by administrators arguing that a particular event should not occur, "because, after all, we are a Catholic University." Interestingly, on one occasion, many faculty members used this same argument against the administration for awarding an honorary degree to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

I began to think that our Catholic identity was like a stealth bomber. From whatever perspective of the Catholic tradition, people used it to censure a discussion. Furthermore, when they did, they were very passionate about it. Then, after this identity was invoked to oppose an event, it disappeared from the radar screen.

On the Church 21 committee, we saw the need to approach Catholic identity more positively and to engage the faculty more directly. In fall 2006, we hosted a university-wide luncheon, which attracted more than 150 faculty members, roughly 25 percent of the full-time members. We asked them to share their concerns and hopes about the Catholic intellectual tradition, or

the "CIT" as we had begun to call it. There, it became clear that our faculty had many differing impressions of the CIT. So we next invited Stephen Schloesser, S.J., associate professor of History, whose book, *Jazz Age Catholicism* had garnered critical attention, to present his read of the tradition. Schloesser presented the CIT as a tradition that engaged both the transcendent and the worldly. To ensure that this discussion of the CIT would be not be for Catholic faculty only, we asked a Jewish faculty member and a Muslim faculty member to give response to Schloesser's presentation. Nearly 200 faculty members attended.

In light of the presentation, BC Provost Cutberto Garza decided that CIT discussions should belong not only to the predominantly Catholic Church 21 project, but also to the academic life of the university. Garza developed the "Provost Planning Committee of the CIT" with an additional 15 faculty members representing a broad university-wide and inter-religious constituency. Some of our leading faculty members were invited from sociology, law, business, philosophy, chemistry, theology, nursing, music and political science. Every invitee accepted the provost's invitation. Our first action was to add a letter to our name: now we would be the Provost Planning Committee on Catholic Intellectual Traditions. Making "Tradition" plural reflected a very significant shift,

wherein we could appreciate the richness, depth, complexity and humanity of Catholic thought.

Throughout the spring semester of 2007, our committee met biweekly; we eventually proposed to the provost that he sponsor two two-year long faculty seminars for 2007-2009. The first was about "Ways of Knowing and Catholic Intellectual Traditions." Was there something about doing research at a Catholic University that was distinctive? For example, does BC sponsor an environment that encourages sociologists to study morality and culture; nurses and educators, matters of disability; or, law professors, matters of conscience? Sociologist Alan Wolfe, director of BC's Center for Religion and American Public Life, agreed to chair the seminar of yet another 14 faculty members across the university. A second two-year seminar, chaired by historian David Quigley featured a different point of inquiry, "The University and Catholic Intellectual Traditions."

While these two new seminars have now been launched, the provost's planning committee is working on a variety of faculty events for the coming spring. To highlight how religious traditions can contribute to peace and justice in the world, the philosopher Richard Kearney is hosting a panel on Inter-religious Dialogue; to listen to Catholic intellectuals from other contexts, the theologian Roberto Goizueta has invited

a major Latin American theologian to address us on the Catholic University in the Industrialized World of the 21st century; to understand how CITs influence literature, theologian Shawn Copeland is inviting a major American Catholic novelist; and so as to offer a more positive grasp of the CITs regarding sexuality, nursing professor Rosanna Demarco is launching a panel on sexual health and the CITs.

Two years later, the Catholic Intellectual Traditions are very much on the radar screen at BC, in part, because as intellectuals, the faculty is engaging them.

In answer to the question posed by Cesareo, about whether a Catholic institution of higher education can exist today, from BC I can answer, so far, so good.

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Social Technology as a New Medium in the Classroom

JEFFREY YAN

New modes of everyday communication—textual, visual, audio and video—are already part of almost every high school and college student's social life. But can such social networking principles be effective in an educational setting?

At the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) where I teach, students spend a lot of time on Facebook and other social networking sites. There is also an emerging interest in sharing academic achievements through social sites. RISD students have populated a rich repository of e-Portfolios in a directory (<http://risd.digication.com/portfolio/directory.digi>) which allows

faculty, alumni, prospective students and prospective employers to browse through student work. Giving students the ability to share their work in this way transforms them into authors and publishers. Brian Hutcheson, who recently completed a master's in teaching at RISD, created a program e-Portfolio as part of his degree requirement and an e-Portfolio showcasing a specific lesson on toy design he created while student teaching. (<http://risd.digication.com/curvinmccabe6/Home/>.) This e-Portfolio, which was shared publicly in RISD's e-Portfolio directory, caught the attention of a highly regarded art

textbook publishing company, Davis Publications, and was featured in their latest edition of *School Arts* magazine. Connections and opportunities like this arise often when the work of teachers and students is shared beyond the classroom through social technology.

In addition, schools and colleges increasingly employ new kinds of communications such as blogs and wikis.

Blogs. Blogs are simple online journals with entries organized chronologically—a structure many people find intuitive and easy to follow. New content is displayed prominently at the top, while older information gets archived.

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Youthful Indiscretions

Should Colleges Protect Social Network Users from Themselves and Others?

DANA L. FLEMING

Counting members in the hundreds of millions, online social networking communities such as MySpace and Facebook may prove nearly as transformative as the 1876 invention of the telephone. Creating a MySpace or Facebook profile is free and making online “friends” is easy—if you're under 30. But students' online identities and friendships come at a price, as job recruiters, school administrators, law enforcement officers and sexual predators sign on and start searching.

MySpace is routinely ranked among the top three most popular websites in America. The site was founded in 2003 by Tom Anderson, a graduate student at UCLA. Two years later, Rupert Murdoch's News Corp.

purchased MySpace for a reported \$327 million. Beyond its financial success, MySpace boasts an international audience with more users than any other networking site in the world.

In New England, however, Facebook is a local favorite among college students and recent graduates, perhaps because it was founded in the region, by then Harvard sophomore Mark Zuckerberg. The first month the site went “live” in 2004, half of Harvard's undergraduates signed up. Its popularity spread to other Boston-area campuses including MIT, Boston University and Boston College. By December 2004, the number of registered Facebook users surpassed one million. Facebook began by catering to undergraduates and for many years restricted mem-

bership by requiring all users to have a “.edu” email account. In recent years, Facebook has opened its site to a wider audience in order to serve the growing demand for online social networking. Yet, Facebook remains the most popular site among New England college students.

Other sites such as Friendster, LiveJournal and YouTube offer additional means for users to “broadcast” their innermost thoughts and secrets across the World Wide Web. To join, a user needs only an email address and a willingness to share his or her “profile” with other users. Profiles usually include pictures and personal descriptions, music and video clips, plus information about the user's relationship status, school

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affiliations, interests and hometown. "Friending" someone (yes, it's a verb now) is as easy as searching for a name and clicking on it. This automatically sends a "friend request" to the other user, which that user can then accept, simply by clicking on the request.

Perhaps not surprisingly, it is commonplace for users to have hundreds, even thousands of friends. Thirty percent of students report accepting "friend" requests from total strangers.

Joining or forming groups on these networks is easy too. With just a few clicks, users can join "Drunks United," "Sexy and Single on MySpace," or "My B.A.C. is Higher Than Your GPA." All of these groups have memberships in the tens of thousands. While privacy settings allow users to restrict who may view their profiles and group affiliations, such settings are rarely enabled by the user. Even when access is restricted to a user's so-called "friends," when students have hundreds or even thousands of "friends," anonymity can be hard to come by.

The explosion in online social networking sites and attendant loss of anonymity carries a cost. One University of Chicago student ruined his chances at a summer internship when an executive from the company viewed his Facebook profile, only to discover that his interests included "smoking blunts" (cigars stuffed with marijuana), shooting people, and obsessive sex. A chemical engineering major sabotaged his career in a similar manner by confessing in his online bio that he liked to "blow things up."

Recruiters are not the only ones checking up on students' profiles. In May 2005, two swimmers at Louisiana State University lost athletic scholarships for making disparaging comments about their coach on Facebook. In October 2005, a student at Boston's Fisher College was reportedly expelled for defaming a college police officer on Facebook. In an ongoing dispute at Millersville University in Pennsylvania, a young woman was denied her teaching degree after a fellow student

brought one of her MySpace photos to the attention of school administrators. The photo, which has spurred a lawsuit, features the young woman wearing a pirate hat, drinking from an opaque plastic cup. The photo is suggestively captioned "Drunken Pirate."

A private Christian university in Virginia got creative when it found out that one of its law students posted an unflattering video of the school's founder, Pat Robertson, on Facebook and YouTube. (In the video, Pat Robertson appears to scratch his face with his middle finger.) The university has demanded that the law student publicly apologize for the posting or submit a legal brief defending it as satire protected under the First Amendment. Reports indicate that the student has chosen the latter punishment.

The dangers of online social networking transcend disciplinary actions and reputational harm. A 17-year-old Rhode Island girl was reportedly drugged and raped by three men she befriended on MySpace. Detectives in Colorado recently used MySpace to identify six men involved in the brutal rape and robbery of one of their online "friends." And the parents of a 13-year-old girl from Texas blame MySpace for their daughter's sexual assault and tried unsuccessfully to sue the company for negligence. The girl, "Julie Doe," lied about her age on her MySpace profile, then agreed to meet one of her "friends" in a restaurant parking lot where her friend, a 19-year-old male, sexually assaulted her. A U.S. District Court Judge dismissed the suit, stating: "If anyone had a duty to protect Julie Doe, it was her parents, not MySpace."

Parents groups, attorneys general and legislators are grappling with how to protect young users from other users and, still more challenging, how to protect young users from themselves. Forty-five attorneys general are pushing MySpace to adopt more parental controls and an

age-verification system. For example, Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal wants to see MySpace raise its minimum age limit from 14 to 16. Several bills in Congress have included provisions barring schools and libraries that receive federal funding from allowing minors to access networking sites like MySpace and Facebook.

Like lawmakers, college administrators have not yet determined how to handle the unique issues posed by the public display of their students' indiscretions. While some are starting to develop very thoughtful policies about these sites, many still wonder what all the fuss is about. Some schools use material from MySpace and Facebook in their judiciary proceedings while others turn a blind eye to the site. Some address the risks associated with these sites during freshman orientation, while others let students proceed at their own risk.

The office of student affairs at the University of Maine warns that while "the administrators are not monitoring Facebook," they may act on any violations of law or University policy if it is brought to their attention. As the school candidly puts it: "Just because you don't want them [the administrators] to look at your page doesn't mean they can't or won't." Norwich University offers this reminder to its students: "As an institution of higher learning, Norwich University recognizes the importance of free speech and the use of information technology in the pursuit of educational goals. Nonetheless ... we are all expected to behave—on campus, in public and online—in a manner consistent with the University's Honor Code and Guiding Values."

The Norwich policy, like many others across the country, is followed by a series of practical tips for online networkers, such as: "Don't post anything you wouldn't be comfortable with your grandmother seeing." Good advice, to be sure, but even a cursory perusal of these sites suggests that many students are not listening.

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There is no practical way for colleges to monitor the content of these sites, as students' profiles and postings are changing *constantly*. It would take a full-time staff working around the clock to scratch the surface of a single network. An aggressive monitoring approach can also backfire. When students find out that a network is being monitored by administrators, they frequently change networks, password-protect their profile or group or post misleading information to confuse and frustrate administrators, (e.g., one student advertised a frat party at a specific dorm room, only to leave a "gotcha" note for campus police).

While a blanket monitoring approach is infeasible, if not counter-productive, a targeted review of online social networking sites can be a good thing. For example, when a student exhibits signs of distress, a review of his or her online profile or blog may be appropriate. A review of a student's profile may also be appropriate where that student is involved in a disciplinary proceeding. Courts treat people's online postings as

evidence in criminal proceedings, and college and university lawyers routinely check students' online profiles. It stands to reason then, that schools are free to use content from these sites in their own judiciary proceedings. Colleges that wish to create a policy specially tailored to online social networking policies should review Cornell's University's "Thoughts on Facebook," which cautions students about the personal risks and legal ramifications of online social networking, while at the same time acknowledging the benefits and popular appeal of such sites.

In this era of aggressive data-mining and total information access, students' privacy is in peril. Advertisers are particularly interested in students' personal information, as they try to tailor ads to individual users. For example, a restaurant may create an online advertisement based not only on the student's geographic location, but also by noting that one of their "friends" is a regular customer. This type of targeted advertising helps to explain the financial success of sites

like MySpace and Facebook where online advertisers can pay as much for online advertising space as they do for commercial slots on primetime TV.

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), colleges have a responsibility not to divulge students' personal information, sell their names, phone numbers and email addresses to advertisers or otherwise violate their privacy rights. But when students post their most intimate secrets online, how can schools protect students' privacy?

Though many students believe that the information they post online is "private," it's not—and the simplest way to address the liabilities posed by these sites is to treat them like any other university activity, subject to the school's code of conduct and applicable state and federal laws.

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Social Technology *continued*

Additionally, blogs offer RSS (real simple syndication) feeds that allow anyone to "subscribe" to be notified when new blog posts become available. Comments connected to individual postings on the blog give the author the opportunity to receive feedback from visitors.

Blogs are great tools for class interaction. Teachers can choose to have one blog to post teaching materials, in forms of images, files and links. Comments can be posted by teachers, classmates, parents or anyone who has been given access. Receiving feedback about coursework from not just a teacher, but also peers or possibly the outside world can be very empowering to students.

They are easy to set up and usually free of charge. Popular blogging platforms used in classrooms include

Blogger (www.blogger.com) and EduBlogs (www.edublogs.org).

Blogs can be networked and created by teachers and students to form a community of blogs where students in a single class or even all students on a given campus can each present their own findings and discoveries.

A colleague of mine, David Bogen, created a rich, active community with blogs at Emerson College (<http://www.digital-culture.com>). Students are publishing their work, thoughts and ideas on a regular basis. For example, students in the "Digital Culture" learning community post all their writing and multimedia work from several classes within the blog/portfolio environment, and use the course blogs for organizing collaborative projects.

Students are publishing their work, thoughts and ideas on a regular basis.

Students are very capable of separating academic and social contexts. Emerson students use the blogs to collaborate academically, but Facebook to socialize.

Wikis. Teachers who want their students to be able to work together in an online publishing environment and need collaborative editing tools for students look to the wiki.

Wikis are often used for group-based writing projects, collaborative note-taking or brainstorming. Teachers can set up wikis for groups of students, allowing them to give feedback with equal footing, make suggestions and changes and jot down ideas. Everyone is an author of the wiki at the same time. Authors can start with very informal ideas and gradually edit and create drafts of their writing to be further edited and shaped by other authors of the wiki.

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The best-known example is Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.com), the online encyclopedia written collaboratively by users around the world. Its global popularity is a testament to the strength that a collective has when united to communicate, share and build content together. At a much smaller and more controlled level, the capabilities of a wiki in the classroom can broaden the learning experience, as student groups build rich, deep content over time. A great example can be found at Brown University's wiki site (<https://wiki.brown.edu/confluence/dashboard.action>), topics from "Biomed" to "Men's Club Soccer" can be found, with students collaborating across campus. In an interesting wiki created for a Chemistry Language course, students are building a collaborative reference of chemistry language terminology (<https://wiki.brown.edu/confluence/display/CHEM/Chemistry+Language>). Scrolling down the page, readers see a growing list of terms that students submitted with questions as well as instructor prompts, audio recordings of students using this terminology and chemistry equations.

Commercially available Wiki software such as PBWiki (www.pbwiki.com) and WikiSpaces (www.wikispaces.com) are very popular in the classroom today because of their ease of setup (usually 15 minutes or less) and their inherent flexibility and collaborative editing features. In Brown's Chemistry Language wiki, the instructor creates the structure of the wiki, invites students to join and then provides the students with guidelines on what kind of content should be submitted and how often (<https://wiki.brown.edu/confluence/display/CHEM/About+This+Site>). Providing the students with information about the purpose and format of the wiki leads to greater success within a course.

Online Learning Communities.

Teachers looking for school-specific collaboration tools may be interested in established, educationally based social networks and online learning communities that can address school- or district-wide communications. An example would be Elgg's educational social network (www.elgg.net) that leverages blogs. Another example is Digication's learning community (www.digication.com), which is based on e-Portfolios. These educationally based communities have safeguards in place to eliminate the dangers found in open social networks, like MySpace and Facebook. These networks are administrated by schools giving them the ability to control the level of openness, define permission settings and disallow outsiders who do not have passwords keeping the network safe and secure.

One unique feature that Elgg offers allows schools to run and host their own social network locally on their own servers. If a school has the necessary expertise in supporting such a network, staff can download the software free of charge and have complete control over the underlying code. Having access to the underlying code enables schools that prefer to be able to customize and manage software onsite using school owned hardware and IT resources to have that flexibility.

Digication's e-Portfolio based online learning communities give teachers and students in K-12 and higher education institutions the ability to personalize and share their content. At RISD's Art + Design Education Department, the students utilize e-Portfolio templates, which provide areas for syllabi, assignments, completed assignments with reflections by students and then evaluation comments by faculty. The e-Portfolio contains an archive of courses and assignments for each student for the entire degree program. From this

documentation, faculty provide regularly scheduled critiques throughout the program. The student may then use the information to create a 'job search' e-Portfolio. An example of such an e-Portfolio, also referred to as a Program Portfolio can be seen at <http://risd.digication.com/mwall/Home>.

Collaboration Motivates

Participation. The new generation of Web 2.0 solutions are easier to use, more engaging and are making a larger impact upon collaboration and communication in the classroom than complex technologies of the past. Technologies adopted in schools today, including blogs, wikis, social networking and online learning communities, are keeping teachers and students connected in and out of class. They are creating opportunities for groups to share, collaborate, showcase and grow together. In addition, they allow exchange of information and ideas not only within the confines of a classroom, but across schools, districts, states and the world. Even 10th grade computer science classes are taking advantage of social technologies for cross-cultural exchanges.

Teachers are amazed at how simple tools for sharing work and ideas can positively transform the classroom. Students who may avoid live class participation are leveraging new communication forms to become more active and "vocal" in a virtual class. The freedom to publish and share ideas creates a learning environment that empowers and motivates both teachers and students.

Jeffrey Yan is co-founder of Digication. He teaches a graduate course at Rhode Island School of Design on integrating technology into the classroom. Email: jeff@digication.com.



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DATA CONNECTION

- Percentage of U.S.-born Massachusetts residents who were born in another state: **25%**
- Percentage of U.S.-born New Hampshire residents who were born in another state: **56%**
- Percentage of University of Rhode Island's 2007 freshman class who are Rhode Island residents: **47%**
- Percentage of University of Maine's 2007 freshman class who are Maine residents: **82%**
- Percentage change in Maine's 15- to 44-year-old population between 2000 and 2005: **-0.6%**
- In Maine's 65-year-old and over population: **+5.1%**
- Percentage of Maine's workforce that is white: **97%**
- Percentage of U.S. workforce that is: **70%**
- Percentage of U.S. foundation CEOs who are white: **94%**
- Percentage of U.S. foundation program officers who are: **65%**
- U.S. rank of Cambridge College in master's degrees conferred on African-Americans: **10th**
- In master's degrees in education conferred on African-Americans: **4th**
- Increase in first-generation college students among Providence College freshmen in first year of not requiring SAT scores for admission: **21%**
- Percentage of U.S. middle schools where students have physical education classes at least three days a week: **15%**
- Percentage of U.S. middle schools where students have access to vending machines: **62%**
- Percentage where students have access to brand-name fast foods from companies such as Pizza Hut, Taco Bell, or Subway: **19%**
- Number of New England cities that rank among the top 10 nationally in the percentage of commuters who walk to work: **4**
- Percentage of American adults who live in rural areas: **19%**
- Percentage of U.S. military deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan suffered by soldiers from rural areas: **26%**
- Unemployment rate among 18- to 24-year-olds in rural America: **9%**
- Number of New England soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan from 2001 through October 2007: **192**
- Number of times the public, two-year college in Manchester, N.H., has changed its name since opening in 1945: **7**
- Number of years since the University of Massachusetts Lowell has built a new academic building: **32**

Sources: 1,2 New England Economic Partnership analysis of U.S. Commerce Department data; 3 University of Rhode Island; 4 University of Maine; 5,6,7,8 Maine Center for Economic Policy; 9,10 Council on Foundations; 11,12 *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*; 13 Providence College; 14,15,16 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 17 *Glimpse Quarterly* analysis of U.S. census data (The four are: Cambridge, New Haven, Boston and Providence.); 18,19,20,21 University of New Hampshire Carsey Institute; 22 Manchester Union-Leader; 23 University of Massachusetts Lowell Chancellor's Office

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