

President Draws Focus To Colleges, Costs

WASHINGTON (AP) — Access to college has been the driving force in federal higher education policy for decades. But the Obama administration is pushing a fundamental agenda shift that aggressively brings a new question into the debate: What are people getting for their money?

Students with loans are graduating on average with more than \$25,000 in debt. The federal government pours \$140 billion annually into federal grants and loans. Unemployment remains high, yet there are projected shortages in many industries with some high-tech companies already complaining about a lack of highly trained workers.

Meanwhile, literacy among college students has declined in the last decade, according to a commission convened during the George W. Bush administration that said American higher education has become “increasingly risk-averse, at times self-satisfied, and unduly expensive.” About 40 percent of college students at four-year schools aren’t graduating, and in two-year programs, only about 40 percent of students graduate or transfer, according to the policy and analysis group College Measures.

College drop-outs are expensive, and not just for the individual. About a fifth of full-time students who enroll at a community college do not return for a second year, costing taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars annually, according to an analysis released last fall by the American Institutes for Research.

There’s been a growing debate over whether post-secondary schools should be more transparent about the cost of an education and the success of graduates. President Barack Obama has weighed in with a strong “yes.”

Greece Awaits Bailout Decision By EU Chiefs

BRUSSELS (AP) — Eurozone governments hoped to sign off on Monday a long-awaited rescue package for Greece, saving it from a potentially calamitous bankruptcy next month, but several key points of division remained, senior officials said.

Finance ministers meeting in Brussels were still wrangling over how to further reduce Greece’s debt load and impose even tighter control over the country’s spending, and the meeting was expected to stretch late into the night. Rich countries like Germany and the Netherlands and the International Monetary Fund want to be sure that Athens can eventually survive without aid.

But after months of delays, time for Greece is running out. The country needs to secure the (euro) 130 billion (\$170 billion) bailout so it can move ahead with a related (euro) 100 billion (\$130 billion) debt relief deal with private investors. That deal needs to be in place quickly if Athens is to avoid a disorderly default on a bond repayment on March 20.

“I am of the opinion that today we have to deliver, because we don’t have any more time,” Jean-Claude Juncker, the prime minister of Luxembourg who also chairs the meetings of eurozone finance ministers, said as he arrived in Brussels.

School Draws Scrutiny Over Fining Students

CHICAGO (AP) — A sense of order and decorum prevails at Noble Street College Prep as students move quickly through a hallway adorned with banners from dozens of colleges. Everyone wears a school polo shirt neatly tucked into khaki trousers. There’s plenty of chatter but no jostling, no cellphones and no dawdling.

The reason, administrators say, is that students have learned there is a price to pay — literally — for breaking even the smallest rules.

Noble Network of Charter Schools charges students at its 10 Chicago high schools \$5 for detentions stemming from infractions that include chewing gum and having untied shoelaces. Last school year it collected almost \$190,000 in discipline “fees” from detentions and behavior classes — a policy drawing fire from some parents, advocacy groups and education experts.

Officials at the rapidly expanding network, heralded by Mayor Rahm Emanuel as a model for the city, say the fees offset the cost of running the detention program and help keep small problems from becoming big ones. Critics say Noble is nickel-and-diming its mostly low-income students over insignificant, made-up infractions that force out kids administrators don’t want.

“We think this just goes over the line ... fining someone for having their shoelaces untied (or) a button unbuttoned goes to harassment, not discipline,” said Julie Woestehoff, executive director of the Chicago advocacy group Parents United for Responsible Education, which staged protests last week over the policy after Woestehoff said she was approached by an upset parent

City Remains ‘Safe Haven’ For Quake Survivor

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — Jane Taylor was managing a women’s clothing store in downtown Christchurch a year ago when the earthquake struck. She was dug from the rubble within minutes with horrific injuries — her vertebrae were crushed, her skull was fractured and her pelvis smashed.

Like Taylor, many survivors of the Feb. 22 earthquake continue to feel the emotional and physical pain from the tragedy that left 185 people dead in New Zealand’s worst natural disaster in 80 years. Yet they are also rediscovering what it means to be part of a family and a community, and life is settling into familiar rhythms.

Taylor was in the hospital for three months, at first in an induced coma. But the 54-year-old says that in the months since, she has found strength from those around her, and has never considered leaving Christchurch.

“It’s our place of love,” she told The Associated Press. Of the fellow survivors she’s gotten to know, “each of us is inspired every day by each other.”

Board

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BID board were as convinced that it is a good idea.

City Manager Doug Russell has said a rough estimate, based on a 60 percent occupancy rate of all the hotel rooms in the city, showed that the BID would generate \$145,000-\$150,000 annually.

While saying that he didn’t necessarily oppose the use of the funds for the purchase of the land, Slowey, the owner of Holiday Inn Express, said he would be much more enticed to go with the plan if it funded a facility that could attract visitors outside of the peak tourism months.

“I’d rather see the money directly, right now, go toward building an indoor facility,” Slowey said.

“If you were here to tell me we’re going to build this field house to fill our (hotel) rooms in the winter, I’m for it,” he stated at a different point in the meeting. “If you’re here to tell me we’re going to buy this piece of ground and I’ve got no control over it, that’s not that appealing to me. Couldn’t we find another way to buy that property and use this money to move towards that facility?”

Russell said there are no new revenue streams that could be used. The money would have to come from existing revenues.

However, if the property were sold to a developer, that revenue could be used to pay off the BID debt, Russell explained. At that point, the BID revenue could be directed toward building a sports complex.

While Russell would make no promises on how fast the property could be sold, he did say there have already been inquiries from

retailers about it.

Seeking to address Slowey’s concerns, Specht asked whether the state would allow for a sales agreement for the property to be signed a year from now. That could allow for another revenue stream to be found, such as the additional sales tax generated from the Menards store that is set to open this spring.

While Slowey was focused on the importance of using the BID to generate more overnight stays, other board members believed that buying the property would ultimately accomplish that end while addressing some other, equally important factors.

“Basically, the reason we want to buy this property is so we have some control of what happens there,” Sommer said. “We look at it as a short-term way to acquire that land and make sure there is a good use for it. Then we’ll take that money from the land sale to go on and do this ball complex, wherever it ends up being.”

When asked if the city would consider allowing a hotel to be built at the location, Wenande stated, “From the City Commission’s perspective, the highest and best use of that property is retail. Why would we be looking at something other than retail? That’s going to bring in the most sales tax dollars — probably more than a hotel. Bruce (Cull) will tell you we do need more hotel rooms, but this is not the ideal place for them.”

The board decided that it would meet again at 8:30 a.m. next Monday to work on reaching more of a consensus among its members before formally inviting the owners of other hotels in the proposed BID to get their input on how to move forward.

Fifty years ago: Friendship 7

On Feb 20, 1962, the third manned flight of the Mercury program achieved the first full orbital flight for an American astronaut, following flights by Soviet cosmonauts Yuri Gagarin and Gherman Titov, and giving NASA a badly-needed success.

John Glenn flew 75,679 mi. (121,793 km), three orbits, then endured a reentry made nerve-wracking by doubts about equipment.

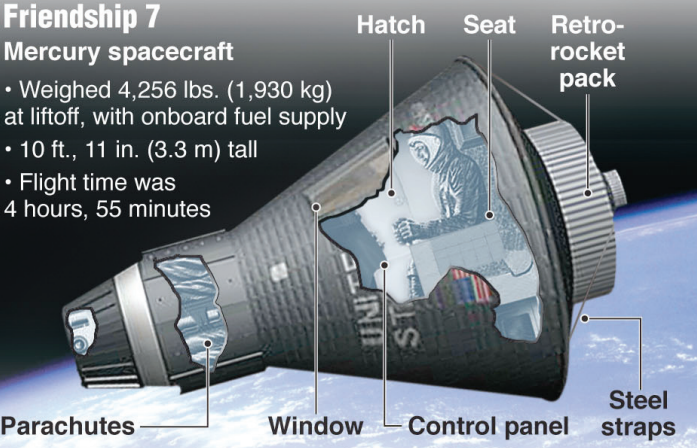
Glenn prepares to board



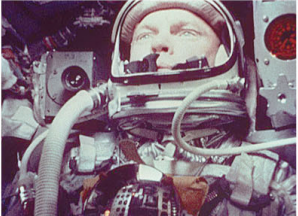
▲ Atlas booster

Friendship 7 Mercury spacecraft

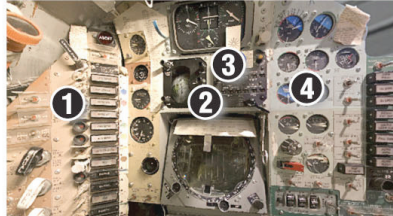
- Weighed 4,256 lbs. (1,930 kg) at liftoff, with onboard fuel supply
- 10 ft., 11 in. (3.3 m) tall
- Flight time was 4 hours, 55 minutes



During the flight, controllers became worried the heat shield might be loose; they told Glenn not to jettison the retro rocket package until late during reentry, hoping its steel straps would hold the shield in place; later inspection showed the shield had been fine



▲ Glenn during flight



▲ Control panel details



Commemorative stamp

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Graphic: Robert Dorrell
Source: NASA

1. **Left panel** Instruments monitoring the spacecraft itself; retro fire, separation, chute deployment
2. **Center panel** Navigational aids; roll/pitch/yaw indicators
3. **Eye charts** Doctors worried about effect of zero gravity on human eye insisted Glenn read these charts
4. **Right panel** Monitors for cabin pressure, electrical systems

River

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devote all the effort that was necessary to address it correctly.”

Prior to his resignation, Lane said he had asked Raschke to voluntarily leave his position.

“With all the legislation and the controversy that has come of it, I talked to every member of the board and they all agreed he could no longer be effective in his position and should resign,” he stated. “

Raschke said his resignation was influenced by state Senate Bill 160, which would allow the Legislature to dissolve the JRWDD and create the James Basin Water Development District.

The Senate passed 24-10 an amended version of the bill. The legislation is now headed for a Thursday hearing in the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

In his resignation letter, Raschke referred to the proposed legislation.

“Recent political events, specifically the proposed legislation of State Senator Al Novstrup, contained in Senate Bill 160, currently before the 2012 South Dakota Legislature, have severely hampered and interfered with the good work of the James River Water Development District,” he said.

“Unfortunately, much of the political discord has focused on me personally, despite my commitment and passionate efforts on behalf of the District and its citizens.”

Raschke added that “it is clear that I must protect the District and put its interests above my own.”

SB 160 comes on the heels of a number of conflicts in recent years between Raschke and Novstrup (R-Aberdeen), who is one of the bill’s sponsors. The co-sponsors include District 18 Rep. Nick Moser (R-Yankton).

SB 160 follows a financial review completed last year by the state Department of Legislative Audit. Among the items revealed by the audit was that master agreements and related task orders were not competitively solicited. In one instance, services provided were not competitively bid as required by state law.

It also found that the JRWDD’s method of contracting put it at increased risk of conflict of interest with contractors. In one case, the president of a company awarded the master agreement was also the employee of three subcontractors used for related task orders.

Raschke has dismissed the findings of the audit as minor, while others such as Novstrup have said it reveals major flaws in the organization.

When contacted Monday by the Press & Dakotan, Novstrup said he had intended to kill SB 160 if Raschke resigned as manager.

“Last week, I said twice that if Mr. Raschke resigned, there would be no need for SB 160 because the problem would have been solved,” he said. “I thought the board could continue forward in a constructive way.”

However, Novstrup said two things had changed in that time that led him to change his mind.

“One of them is, when I made both of those comments, the president of the board was Jim Lane,” he said. “I’ve got confidence in Jim Lane, and I thought he could move the board forward.”

The second mitigating circumstance was that he was contacted during the weekend by what Novstrup described as “a credible person” about multiple board members involved in an alleged violation of state law more than five years ago.

“If those allegations are true, I have even less confidence in the board,” he said.

Novstrup said that, in addition to dissolving the JRWDD, his bill will give counties within its current boundaries the freedom to have no water district, create a one-county water district or develop a district with neighboring counties. The county commissions could also put the decision on the November ballot, he added.

Two executive sessions were held during Monday’s JRWDD meeting. Raschke said he met with the board during the first executive session dealing with his resignation. He did not participate in the second executive session regarding his severance package.

The package includes two major

Glenn Chats With Space Station To Mark Anniversary

BY KANTELE FRANKO

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — John Glenn made his historic spaceflight alone in 1962 but celebrated its 50th anniversary Monday among hundreds of people within his orbit, from fellow headline-making astronauts and NASA’s administrator to family, friends and students at Ohio State University, where the public affairs school bears his name.

They watched footage of the launch, laughed at his enduring sense of humor and showered him with applause, praising the man who became the first American to orbit the Earth on Feb. 20, 1962.

Neil Armstrong, the first man to set foot on the moon, told the audience at the celebratory gala that Glenn was “no ordinary pilot.” There was a need for leadership in the space program in the early 1960s, Armstrong said, and Glenn “literally rose to the occasion.”

The former astronaut and U.S. senator from Ohio, now 90, circled the Earth three times in five hours and was viewed as a national hero for helping to lead the United States into space.

“I think the hero thing is in the eye of the beholder,” Glenn said during a question-and-answer session with Annie, his wife of nearly seven decades. “I don’t look at myself that way.”

Asked about his heroes, Glenn said he admires different qualities in different people, such as the perseverance of former U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords of Arizona, who was severely injured in a shooting last year.

Her husband Mark Kelly, a retired astronaut and commander of the space shuttle Endeavour’s final mission, was the night’s featured speaker and said he was honored to be sitting between two of his own heroes, Armstrong and Glenn. He

brought the audience a message from Giffords: “Be passionate. Be courageous. Be strong. Be your best.”

Glenn urged the audience to support research and education and shared the lessons he learned when he was among the top military test pilots presented in 1959 as the Mercury Seven. The only other surviving Mercury astronaut is Scott Carpenter, who called out the memorable line “Godspeed John Glenn” moments before the rocket ignited for Glenn’s spaceflight.

“With a lot of work and a lot of people organized, you can do almost anything,” Glenn said.

Earlier Monday, NASA had surprised Glenn with the kind of anniversary gift only a space agency can give, enabling him to speak live with the International Space Station from a stage at Ohio State University.

Sitting on stage with NASA Administrator Charles Bolden, he chatted with three space station crew members about space research and NASA’s future. Commander Dan Burbank appeared by video link, flanked by two flight engineers floating in the zero-gravity environment, and said the crew was delighted to help commemorate Glenn’s momentous trip.

“Fifty years ago today, Friendship 7 was orbiting planet Earth, and that helped in a very big way, pave the way for America to become a space power, and to go to the moon, and to do the things that we’re doing right now on the International Space Station,” Burbank said.

Glenn had a light-hearted but educational exchange with the crew, asking them about the types and number of experiments on board — more than 100, they said — and explaining to his gravity-bound audience of more than 200 people that, for example, a candle burns differently in space than on Earth.

cept applications for the board seat, she said.

Persons interested in the Area 8 board seat must collect at least 25 valid signatures on petitions submitted to the JRWDD office for verification, Smoyer said.

“With the vacancy, (Lane’s) replacement will be appointed by the board to serve until the next election in November. That person could then run for a four-year term,” she said. “If we have two or three (applicants), I anticipate the board would go through an interview process.”

The JRWDD board is waiting until its next regular meeting, set for March 15 at the district office in Huron, before taking further action on a new manager, Smoyer said.

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