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Mizzou lecture series honors congressman who died in plane crash

COLUMBIA, Mo. -- A new University of Missouri lecture series honors a young politician who died 26 years ago in a plane crash while campaigning for the U.S. Senate.

Jerry Litton was a rancher and two-term congressman from Chillicothe who died in 1976 with his wife and two children while flying to a Kansas City victory party after winning the state's Democratic primary for U.S. Senate.

The university's College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and a Litton family foundation will host the inaugural Litton lecture on Monday at the Bond Life Sciences Center.

The speaker is farm broadcaster Orion Samuelson, a member of the National Radio Hall of Fame.

Litton, who died at age 39, was a Missouri graduate.



UM joins national Project Degree Completion

By Janese Silvey

The University of Missouri System has signed its four campuses on to a national initiative pledging to boost the number of college graduates by 2025.

Project Degree Completion is a joint effort between the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Nearly 500 schools have signed on, agreeing to also improve access and diversity and to increase the number of students earning science, technology, engineering or math-related degrees.

Although it was a university system decision, MU Provost Brian Foster said the pledge reflects the campus's commitments.

"We're a public university that's engaged in strong ways with the community and the state, and in so many different dimensions: economic development, providing access to an education, doing research and creating intellectual property," he said. "It's a very complex kind of mission, this commitment to these different dimensions including, and especially, the commitment to graduate more students. It's important we make that commitment publicly and strongly."

In a lot of areas, MU already has been meeting goals set out in the national initiative. The graduation rate hit an all-time high last year, exceeding 70 percent, and enrollment has been growing at record levels for years. Last year, MU awarded roughly 8,047 degrees, educating 25 percent of all undergraduates who attend public universities in Missouri, according to data from MU's News Bureau. And roughly one in three degrees was in math, engineering, health or other science-related fields.

"We can't grow enrollment forever, but we can grow some more and probably will," Foster said. "But it's not just about growth; it's about providing access to a broad range of people, and we do that in a lot of different ways."

The numbers of minority and low-income students have increased substantially in the past decade. And in the past five years, Foster said, MU has cultivated relationships with community colleges, providing a path for students who start at two-year colleges to continue toward bachelor's degrees.

Project Degree Completion also urges colleges to cut the time it takes students to earn degrees. MU is working to integrate its programs, which should lead to more efficiency and make it easier for students to graduate earlier, Foster said. Already, a night program on campus has been scrapped, allowing evening courses to be integrated with day offerings, and online classes are becoming part of the traditional experience.

"That provides more options for students to get their coursework done," Foster said.

The UM System also has been working toward the goals by keeping tuition increases modest, investing more in student financial aid and reducing administrative expenses.

"We have an ongoing commitment to accessibility and affordability," UM spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said. "This formally cements that in writing. These are things we have long been committed to in the past and have been making some great strides."

Missouri system joins national graduation push

COLUMBIA, Mo. -- The four campuses of the University of Missouri System have joined a national movement to increase the number of college graduates by 2025.

The university will be one of about 500 schools involved in Project Degree Completion. The schools agree to improve access and diversity, as well as increase the number of students earning science, technology, engineering or math-related degrees.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reported Monday the university already meets some of the program's goals. Last year's graduation rate was more than 70 percent, and enrollment has been growing at record levels for years. About one in three degrees was in math, engineering, health or other science-related fields.

The MU system also is working to reduce the time it takes to earn a degree, another goal of the program.

Colleges build to compete in business school ‘arms race’

Today’s students want a school that embraces technology and helps them get their business going.

By MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

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When it comes to attracting the best business students these days, Ali Mallekzadeh knows what it takes.

“Very astute students walk through the doors of your college with a check list,” said Mallekzadeh, dean of Kansas State University’s College of Business Administration. “They are asking: ‘Do you have an entrepreneurial center, and an international business center, a financial trading center, a place to start a new business? And by the way, do you have an espresso machine?’

“And the answers need to be ‘yes’ if you want to stay competitive.”

Lots of universities are saying “yes” right now, erecting big new buildings for their business schools, facilities filled with 21st-century technology to support the latest teaching methods.

The University of Kansas last week announced plans for a \$60 million building for its School of Business, double the size of the current facility.

The University of Missouri-Kansas City already has its new b-school building in the works. K-State expects to put up a \$50 million building in the near future.

Call it a “business school building arms race” — that’s how Robert Mittelstaedt, the dean of Arizona State University’s Top 25 business school, puts it. His school’s new building, scheduled to open next year, “is not just to attract more students, but to make room for all the stuff we’ve now got crammed into a five-pound bag,” he said.

A list compiled by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business shows that more than 100 business schools across the country have either completed a new building this year, renovated or expanded an old one, or are raising money for a new one. Among other regional entries: new buildings for Washington University in St. Louis, to open in 2013, Oklahoma State University (2015) and the University of Nebraska (2016).

In the Kansas City area, no other public or private universities are on the list. The University of Missouri's Robert J. Trulaske Sr. College of Business opened in 2002.

"My personal survey of the landscape shows that there is an increased emphasis on building new business schools tied to an increased interest in naming opportunities from alumni," said Douglas Viehland, executive director of the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs.

When UMKC's new 65,000-square-foot, four-story building opens next fall, it will include a business startup brainstorming area and innovation lab. It's being built with a \$32 million gift UMKC received from Henry W. Bloch in 2011.

KU's push for a new building started Thursday with a \$20 million gift from the Capitol Federal Savings Foundation. The building will allow KU to adopt new methods of teaching business, dean Neeli Bendapudi said.

The professor at the head of a lecture hall or classroom is the way of the past. Students now work in teams, creating their own businesses and taking them from the classroom to the market. They work on mock international trading floors and in simulated business environments.

K-State will soon launch a campus-wide fundraising campaign that will include money for a new business college building on its Manhattan campus.

The existing building is more than 100 years old and not big enough for the school's 2,600 business students, Mallekzadeh said. The result: 60 percent of business classes are held elsewhere on campus.

Nationally, more students pursue bachelor degrees in business than in any other area of study, said Viehland, whose accreditation council represents 1,100 two- and four-year campuses, public and private. And according to the Business School Journal, the country saw a sharp rise in the volume of business master's degrees granted, from fewer than 5,000 in 1960 to more than 100,000 in 2000.

Viehland said that pattern of growth has continued over the last decade, albeit slowing some through the recession. But he said it is picking up steam as the economy improves.

With the growth has come increased competition for students — hence the drive to build more innovative business school facilities.

"That has been the history and that is the projection for the future," Viehland said. "You can say that colleges are bullish on business education."

They're bullish back East, where the University at Albany, the State University of New York, is eagerly waiting the completion next fall of a \$64 million business school building. The architectural firm that designed the new building has in the last decade designed 18 b-school buildings across the country.

The dean at Albany, Donald Siegel, said his new building is the first major academic facility to be built on the campus since the mid-1960s.

"We need this to be more competitive," he said. "We need this to catch up to our peers."

Across the country, at Boise State University in Idaho, the \$35 million Micron Business and Economics Building opened this fall with a 14 percent increase in new business majors, said dean Patrick Shannon. "It does matter to business students, just like in athletics, whether a facility is attractive."

But it's more than looks, said Evan Kirsch, a UMKC business student.

"We want to follow our passions," he said. "But we also want to be around people in the field, professionals, business people who are looking at the university we choose. We want to be at a business school that has the latest opportunities."

It's also important that the school be connected to the community so that students make contacts, Kirsch said. When he learned that UMKC's school was named for Bloch, "that was huge for me."

"I wanted to be at a school built by an entrepreneur who knows how to create jobs."



The Supreme Court once again takes up the controversial issue of racial preferences on college campuses, and the court's tilt to the right in recent years could doom such programs.

Richard Wolf and Mary Beth Marklein

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Story Highlights

- Court's tilt to the right could end affirmative action
- Minority enrollments could be threatened
- Plaintiff says UT-Austin rejected her because she's white

5:37PM EST October 8, 2012 - WASHINGTON — The spirit of the late Heman Sweatt will be inside the Supreme Court this week when the justices consider whether the University of Texas-Austin campus that he first integrated in 1950 has carried its system of racial preferences too far.

That's the argument posed by Abigail Fisher, who contends that her application for admission in 2008 was rejected because of her skin color: white.

Sweatt probably could relate to that. He sued the university after being blocked from admission in 1946 because he was black. Today, his descendants say, racial preferences are still needed to guarantee equal opportunities for minorities.

Both sides will be in court Wednesday when the justices take up *Fisher v. University of Texas* and the underlying issue of affirmative action that still divides the nation -- more than a half-century after Sweatt made civil rights history.

"*Fisher* gives the Supreme Court the opportunity to clarify the boundaries of race preferences in college admissions — or, perhaps, eliminate them altogether," says Edward Blum, director of the Project on Fair Representation, which fights in court against the use of racial and ethnic preferences.

The court has taken a turn to the right since its last ruling upholding affirmative action in 2003. Five justices are on record opposing the practice. That could mean defeat for the university — and, possibly, a sweeping declaration that racial preferences are unconstitutional, not only at public universities but also at private schools such as Harvard and Yale because they receive federal funds.

"I would hate to see that happen," says Heman Marion Sweatt II, 62, a nephew of Heman Sweatt and a University of Texas graduate. "A lot of people feel that affirmative action is not needed anymore. I would love to see the day when affirmative action is not needed, but realistically, it still has to be dealt with."

On the flip side of that argument is Fisher, a plain-spoken young Texan denied entry into her father's and sister's alma mater. She says racial preferences made her a victim of discrimination.

"There were people in my class with lower grades who weren't in all the activities I was in who were being accepted into UT, and the only other difference between us was the color of our skin," she says in a video posted by the Project on Fair Representation to make its case. "For an institution of higher learning to act this way makes no sense to me."

The vast majority of higher education groups say it makes a great deal of sense. In brief after brief submitted to the Supreme Court in support of the Texas flagship university, organizations representing nearly all facets of higher learning – including public research universities, Ivy League schools, undergraduate and law students, even college basketball coaches – argue that colleges and universities must be allowed to consider race and ethnicity in admissions to achieve the educational benefits of a diverse student body. Some say nothing less than the nation's future is at stake.

The United States "is in the midst of a perfect storm of economic crisis, rapidly shifting demographics and lagging educational achievement compared to other nations," says University of Missouri higher education professor Roger Worthington, editor of the *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. "If we do not fix the underlying educational disparities that exist in this country, there is no path forward to regaining our competitiveness on educational or economic grounds."

Denied because 'he is a negro'

Before the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case of 1954 — the unanimous court decision striking down public school segregation — and a series of cases on racial preferences leading up to *Fisher*, there was *Sweatt v. Painter*.

It was a simple case. Sweatt had sued the university and its president, Theophilus Painter, for denying him admission to the UT law school in 1946 because, as Painter pointed out at the time, "of the fact that he is a negro."

Heman Sweatt integrated the University of Texas School of Law in 1950. (Photo: Othell O. Owensby, Houston Chronicle, via AP)

To represent him before the Supreme Court, Sweatt chose Thurgood Marshall, who would go on to become the court's first black justice. He won the case based on another "fact" — that he could not get an equally sound legal education elsewhere in Texas. It was the first time the court had ordered a black student admitted to an all-white institution.

Sweatt left the law school before graduating, the victim of chronic health problems and a divorce. But his case may be more relevant to the court's consideration of *Fisher* than most of the cases that have followed, including *Brown*.

Today, those rulings have become victims of their own success. Schools and universities have grown more integrated, however haltingly. In *Grutter v. Bollinger*, the court's 5-4 decision upholding the University of Michigan Law School's limited use of affirmative action, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor

predicted, "The Court expects that 25 years from now, the use of racial preferences will no longer be necessary to further the interest approved today."

The Michigan case wasn't a slam dunk for the civil rights movement. At the same time, the court ruled 6-3 against the university's more numerical system of racial preferences for undergraduate admissions. And the O'Connor decision included a dissent from Justice Anthony Kennedy that takes on added weight today: Since her retirement, he has become the swing vote.

"Preferment by race, when resorted to by the state, can be the most divisive of all policies, containing within it the potential to destroy confidence in the Constitution and in the idea of equality," Kennedy wrote in *Grutter*.

Kennedy's significance as the man in the middle hasn't been lost on lawyers for Fisher and the university. They mention him by name 50 times in their three main briefs.

Fisher's lawyers contend that the university seeks "racial balancing," something Kennedy clearly doesn't sanction. "Racial balance is not to be achieved for its own sake," he wrote in a Georgia desegregation case in 1992.

The school's lawyers point out that in using race as one factor, the university isn't resorting to quotas or numerical targets, which Kennedy disavowed in his *Grutter* dissent. They say the lawsuit "is just asking this court to move the goal posts on higher education in America and overrule its precedent going back 35 years."

The makeup of today's court is notable for other reasons. O'Connor's replacement is Justice Samuel Alito, a firm conservative who argued against affirmative action in the 1980s while serving in the solicitor general's office under President Ronald Reagan. On the left, Justice Sonia Sotomayor has called herself a "product of affirmative action" because of her admission into prestigious Ivy League schools despite less than stellar test scores. Justice Elena Kagan has recused herself from the case because of her previous involvement as solicitor general in 2009-10.

Colleges could 'lose out on a lot of great kids'

If the Supreme Court rules that the university went too far in using racial preferences, most experts predict the campus could see a drop in black and Hispanic enrollments, just as it did after the 5th Circuit Court outlawed a race-conscious admissions policy used by the University of Texas School of Law in 1996. A year later, state legislators created the "Top 10 Percent" plan, through which students in the top 10% of their high school graduating class are automatically admitted to the state university of their choice.

That law has helped schools boost racial diversity, primarily because most of the state's public high schools are segregated by race and ethnicity, but not enough to achieve a "critical mass," school officials said. After the Supreme Court upheld the University of Michigan's affirmative action program, the University of Texas again began factoring race into admissions.

If the justices decide more broadly that extra measures designed to boost racial and ethnic representation on campus are unconstitutional or no longer necessary, the nation's most selective universities, public and private, will lose a long-standing tool aimed at furthering their mission to prepare a diverse pool of well-trained graduates for leadership roles.

A ruling against the University of Texas, or more broadly, the consideration of race in admissions, also threatens to upend a tradition by the court of deference toward university decision-making, says Ada Meloy, general counsel of the American Council on Education, a non-profit umbrella group that represents higher education institutions in Washington. She says colleges will remain committed to that goal even if Texas loses the case.

"It is so important to the vast majority of higher education institutions to be able to assemble the kind of student body that they think best fits their mission," she says.

Some of those who have petitioned the court on Fisher's behalf say colleges don't deserve that freedom. They argue that Jews, Asian Americans and others have been discriminated against in the past because of their academic talents, and nothing prevents such discrimination from extending to others in the future.

"Over their history, colleges and universities have often fallen prey to fashionable race discrimination," says a brief submitted by California and Connecticut faculty members and scholars, among others, who urge the court to overrule the University of Michigan decision. "Consequently, they are unlikely candidates to receive special deference on matters of race."

Colleges would probably turn to race-neutral alternatives used by public universities where affirmative action has been banned, Meloy says.

Already, public universities in Texas, California and other states have stepped up recruitment in high schools where the student body is made up predominantly of underrepresented minorities, established partnerships with schools to improve the pipeline of minority students, and established scholarships. The University of Georgia, Texas A&M University and the University of California system have dropped preferences for children of alumni, which tend to favor white students from relatively affluent families.

Colleges also might de-emphasize or eliminate an admissions requirement for standardized test scores, on which black and Hispanic students tend to score lower than white and Asian students.

In a study this month by the non-profit Century Foundation, author Richard Kahlenberg argues universities should accept that affirmative action has run its course and replace racial preferences with class-based preferences. Schools could put more weight on factors such as parental income, parents' education levels and resources available in the community where they live, he says.

Studies of the University of California system, where racial preferences have been banned since 1996, suggest that such measures alone would not be sufficient. At the University of California-Los Angeles, for example, African-American students represented 6.7% of its freshman class in 1995, but only 3% in 1998 and 3.6% last year despite multiple race-neutral strategies.

"All of our efforts in terms of outreach have not made an impact," says Youlonda Copeland-Morgan, associate vice chancellor of enrollment management. "Race matters."

In Del Valle, Texas, a predominantly black and Hispanic community east of Austin, Del Valle High School college counselor Sarah Mabry says many of her brightest students have overcome great obstacles to get to the point where they would even consider applying to a prestigious school such as the University of Texas.

"Let's give everybody the chance they deserve," she says. "For God's sake, this is America."

That's just why others argue against racial preferences — to protect the rights of Fisher and others who they say are victims of discrimination when universities ignore their superior qualifications.

"Nowhere in the Constitution or the Declaration of Independence does the word 'diversity' appear," a group of Texas faculty members argue in a brief supporting Fisher. "There is no constitutional basis for the courts, let alone a state university, to engage in such a radical restructuring of America, allocating education, jobs and contracts based on race."

If the Texas plan is declared unconstitutional, Marie Bigham, director of college counseling at the highly diverse Greenhill School in the Dallas suburb of Addison, predicts a chilling effect.

"My students of color, I worry they're going to say that 'these places don't value what I bring,'" she says. White students, too, will look elsewhere, she says. "When my students are shopping for colleges, (diversity) is an important data point for them. We're going to lose out on a lot of great kids."

'I didn't take this sitting down'

Among those either siding with Fisher or making the case against affirmative action programs are scholars who argue that racial preferences hurt those they are supposed to help.

Gail Heriot, one of three members of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to file a brief supporting Fisher, points to studies showing that minority students frequently falter at the toughest schools and in the most rigorous fields of study. Admitting them to Princeton rather than Penn State isn't always in their interest, she says.

"Grades matter more ... than eliteness of law school," says Heriot, a law professor at the University of California-San Diego. Minority students, she says, often should "thumb their nose at Princeton and go to a school where they're going to be a success."

That's the view of Richard Sander, a UCLA law professor and economist who studies the effects of racial preferences. He argues in his book, *Mismatch*, co-authored with Washington journalist Stuart Taylor Jr., that generous preferences from elite schools often doom students to failure.

"Our whole focus is on what will work," Sander says. "We're trying to make this a pragmatic discussion. It's been a very ideological discussion."

On the other side, the 73 briefs filed in support of the university's position include those from business executives, government officials and retired military leaders who say their fields need college affirmative action programs to provide a stream of qualified minority applicants. Several cite a 2009 study by retired Princeton University president William Bowen that shows low-income and minority students who enroll in academically demanding institutions are more likely to graduate than students with similar academic qualifications who enroll in less challenging colleges.

A brief filed by several Fortune 100 companies argues that affirmative action programs are "more important today than ever" because of a "country and world economy that are increasingly diverse." Another filed by former military leaders, including Colin Powell, Michael Mullen and Wesley Clark, warns that ending the practice "would seriously disrupt the military's efforts to maintain military cohesion and effectiveness."

An end to racial preferences also would come as a setback to Sweatt's descendants — among them his daughter, who is a pathologist; another nephew, who is a doctor; and a 13-year-old grandson, who will be in court taking copious notes for his school newspaper.

"If you have to ask somebody, 'Do we need affirmative action?' then I think that answers the question itself," says nephew Heman Marion Sweatt II.

Fisher, who graduated this year from Louisiana State University and is working in Austin as a financial analyst, couldn't disagree more.

"If people say anything about me, I hope they say I didn't take this sitting down," she says in the video. "I didn't accept the process, because the process is wrong."

McCaskill and Akin on education: Dollars and sense of the candidates' contrasting policies

MU Mention on Pg. 2

By Hank Koebler

October 9, 2012 | 6:00 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — U.S. Senate candidates Todd Akin and Claire McCaskill don't agree on dollars and sense when it comes to the federal government's role in providing loans and other financial aid to U.S. college students.

Throughout the campaign season, McCaskill, the incumbent Democrat seeking a second term, and Akin, the Republican congressman who's seeking election to the higher chamber, have offered contrasting views about the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act. The act eliminated Federal Family Education Loans, a program through which the federal government offered banks subsidies for providing student loans and covered the banks' losses when borrowers defaulted.

Under the new Direct Loans program, which took effect as a rider on the Health and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, the federal government no longer subsidizes banks' student loans but instead loans money directly to students.

At a Sept. 21 debate at the Holiday Inn Executive Center in Columbia, Akin expressed support for re-establishing the Federal Family Education Loan program.

"Why don't we leave it the way it was a few years ago where private lenders could be involved in student loans?" Akin said. "Just because you believe in private lenders doesn't mean you don't believe in student loans."

McCaskill countered by saying the government saved money and was able to help make college more affordable by eliminating federal subsidies for loans made by banks.

“What we did is we took the middle man out of the student loans and took that cut they were making with no risk because the federal government was backing those loans, and we took that money and increased the amount of Pell Grants,” McCaskill said.

How does the debate play out at the MU Office of Student Financial Aid? Six years of data show that more students are receiving Pell Grants and that those grants are coming in larger amounts since the change took place. The same is true for federal student loans.

Bradley Curs, an associate professor of educational leadership and policy analysis at MU, said eliminating the federally subsidized bank loans helped save the Pell Grants.

“Part of it was we would’ve had to cut the Pell Grant if they didn’t cut the FFEL,” Curs said. “The Pell Grant didn’t keep up with inflation. Congress started trying to fix that at the end of the Bush administration and the start of the Obama administration.”

Pell Grants don't have to be repaid. Congress sets the maximum Pell Grant award in its annual budget.

Students applying for financial aid file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, known as FAFSA, every year. The FAFSA form calculates a rough estimate of how much a family can afford to contribute toward a student's college education.

The amount a full-time student is eligible to receive through a Pell Grant is the maximum minus the student’s “expected family contribution.” For example, a full-time student whose family was expected to contribute \$1,000 in 2010-11, when the maximum Pell Grant available was \$5,500, would be eligible for \$4,500.

MU’s financial aid data show that since 2005 there has been a steady increase in the percentage of students relying on Pell Grants and loans to pay for college, with the largest spike occurring in 2009-10. The percentage of MU students receiving Pell Grants hovered between 15 percent and 17 percent from 2005-06 through 2008-09. The number jumped to 20.04 percent in 2009-10 and rose again to 22.94 percent in 2010-11.

In 2009-10, the average amount awarded per Pell Grant also rose from \$3,159 to \$3,866, an increase of 22.36 percent. Part of the increase could be attributed to the \$727 boost in the Pell Grant’s maximum amount in 2009-10. Even when accounting for that, though, the average grant still increased most in 2008-09 and in 2009-10.

Curs said the increase in the number of students receiving Pell Grants and the amounts of the grants are a result of the nationwide economic collapse of 2008.

“That’s just the economy tanking a little bit and more people qualifying for them,” Curs said.

Congress passed the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act in the summer of 2010, meaning its effects would first show up in the numbers from the 2010-11 school year.

Although the numbers don’t increase as sharply as they did in 2009-10, Curs said the act’s effect still shows in the data. Curs said Pell Grant funding would have been cut drastically if Congress had not cut the Federal Family Education Loan.

“They cut the FFEL to save money,” Curs said. “Not necessarily to make Pell Grants stronger but to keep the Pell Grant as is. Students on Pell are better off because FFEL was cut. The Pell Grant remains stable.”

Curs also noted that Pell Grants’ maximum amounts fall well below MU’s cost of attendance, but he said he estimated the changes made by the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act help students pay for college with a combination of Pell Grants and federal loans.

The federal government can issue three types of loans. Direct subsidized loans accrue no interest while the student remains enrolled full time. Direct unsubsidized loans accrue interest from the time they are initiated. The federal government also provides Direct PLUS loans to students' parents. The MU data show the amounts borrowed through all three programs increase at roughly the same pace as tuition costs.

Curs explained that while the amounts awarded in loans didn't change much, he believes the difference in Pell Grant funding has helped students use their available forms of financial aid to pay for college.

“My guess is students at Mizzou are better off because of this change,” Curs said of the restructured program. “It doesn’t cover everything. That’s why they still take parent loans. My guess is that if you’re a low-income student at Mizzou, Pell Grants, subsidized loans, unsubsidized loans and parent loans should cover the cost of education.”

Supervising editor is Scott Swafford.