Colleges Are Wary As Manchin Calls For Tuition Freeze

By CHRISTINE MILLER FORD
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CHARLESTON — Gov. Joe Manchin’s proposal to freeze tuition rates is a worthy goal and might work in the short term, say school officials around the state, but it isn’t without problems.

“We share the governor’s desire to promote access and affordability,” said Brian Noland, chancellor of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. “But we’re being asked to do more and more with less.”

During last week’s State of the State address, Manchin called on technical and four-year colleges to keep tuition rates static for the upcoming academic year.

The trouble lies, notes Shepherd University President Suzanne Shipley, fixed expenses such as utility costs and supplies continue to increase. Without imposing a tuition increase, schools may be forced to scale back what they offer the student body.

“Limiting our ability to increase tuition may force us to consider reducing services to students, something which we wish to avoid,” she said.

Colleges increasingly must balance providing a high-quality education experience with the need to keep college within students’ financial reach, said Greg Quick, vice president of advancement at Concord University.

He notes that while students in lower-income families qualify for Pell grants and other help and students from wealthier families can afford to attend college even as costs rise, those in the middle class are left to scramble.

“What happens is those students look to loans and we’re seeing students leave school with an enormous indebtedness, which isn’t good,” Quick said.

“We want to provide a dynamic, life-changing opportunity for our students, but we also are mindful of the need to keep our costs realistic so that we don’t limit access,” he said. “That’s the tightrope that we have to walk.”

James Clements, president of West Virginia University, in a news release offered praise for the governor’s commitment to creating access to education, but added that WVU officials are “running the numbers” on whether a tuition freeze could work for 2010-11.

“It’s clear Governor Manchin cares deeply about education and understands the key to success in West Virginia is a greater level of education and that access is a priority,” Clements said. “We’ll do everything we can to help the governor fulfill his vision.”

Noland points out that because West Virginia’s state institutions are getting federal stimulus money to supplement budgets this year, the financial pinch isn’t being felt in full force.

“It’s not this year but two, three, four years down the road that we need to be thinking about,” he said. “We’re going to have to find ways to maximize every efficiency.”

The possibilities to be considered, Noland said, might include finding ways to attract more out-of-state students and to ensure that students who attend college finish their degrees.
Singing competition showcases young voices

By DAN DEARTH
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SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. — Aspiring opera singers from high schools across the Tri-State area competed against their peers and a chance to win a $300 prize Saturday at Shepherd University.

Shepherd voice professor Joe Regan said the Shepherd Vocal Competition began in 1991 to offer students an opportunity to test their voices against children who are of the same age and skill level.

“That sort of raises the bar,” Regan said. “It gives them something to shoot for.”

Regan said that in addition to the $300, $200 and $100 prizes that were awarded for first, second and third places, the 14 competitors were critiqued by six professional judges. The students also were given a chance to talk to Shepherd music students to find out what to expect if they decide to study voice in the future.

“It's to give these kids access to a thriving ... college music community,” Regan said. “They can ask, 'Is it really just music? What are the hours? What is the work like? How hard do you have to work to get through?’”

First-place finisher Elias Orfan, 17, of Hagerstown, said he began taking voice lessons three years ago.

“I've always sung for auditions at school, but I've never been in a competition setting,” Orfan said. “That raised the bar. I'm glad to have won. The (prize) money is just a plus.”

Orfan, who sang Marcello's "Quella Fiamma," said he wants to study music at Boston University or Ithaca (N.Y.) College.

Maddie Zayas, a 16-year-old sophomore at the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts, placed second for her performance of "Un moto di."

"It really shows my whole voice,” Zayas said after the competition. "It really brings it out. It's a challenge."

Zayas said she was nervous at first, but settled down a short time into her recital.

"It's normal to be nervous, but singing is what I love to do," Zayas said.

Zayas said she wants to pursue a degree in music at the Peabody Conservatory or the University of Maryland. But for now, she said she is content attending the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts, which opened in downtown Hagerstown this year. The school offers high school students college preparatory courses in academics and the arts.

"It's great," Zayas said. "I love it so much that I want to work there when I graduate."

Bethany Pasierb of Chambersburg, Pa., took third place.
Shepherd program
to present film

SHEPHERDSTOWN – Shepherd University’s Common Reading Program and the American Conservation Traveling Film Festival will present the documentary “Seed Hunter” in the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies Auditorium on Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Dr. Keith Alexander, visiting assistant professor of Shepherd University’s Department of Environmental Studies and director of archives for the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies, will lead a post-film discussion with refreshments to follow. The event is free and open to the public.

Produced and directed by Melbourne-based filmmaker Sally Ingleton, “Seed Hunter” follows Australian scientist Dr. Ken Street on a quest to find ancient seeds with genes that may help save our food from the impact of climate change. Street carries ancient seeds he has collected to a massive seed storage facility above the Arctic Circle, christened the Doomsday Vault.

This facility, located in the remote, icy cliffs of the Norwegian island of Svalbard in the Arctic Ocean, was designed to store vital heritage seeds, keeping them safe in a deep freeze.

A vast, concrete locker, the Doomsday Vault was built to withstand almost any conceivable disaster, thereby protecting diverse collections of seeds for the future survival and benefit of humanity. More information is available by contacting Judi McIntyre, director of First Year Experience, at (304) 876-5396.
Chlorine leaks at Shepherd pool

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. — Crews from Jefferson and Berkeley counties were able to fix a small chlorine leak at the Shepherd University Wellness Center pool that brought a local hazmat team to campus on Sunday.

Shepherdstown Fire Department Chief Ross Morgan said a maintenance worker called in the leak at about 6:30 p.m. Sunday.

A failed chlorine pump leaked approximately five gallons of the hazardous material into the pool pump room, forcing the university to evacuate the pool for a few hours, Morgan said.

A hazmat crew from Berkeley County (W.Va.) was able to clear the leaked chlorine, he said.

By 10 p.m. Sunday, the pool was operational, Morgan said.

“It was just a mechanical failure in the pump, no other cause that we know of,” he said.

Morgan said that to his knowledge, this was the first time the pool at Shepherd University had experienced such a leak.
University library to host reception

SHEPHERDSTOWN — The Scarborough Society of Shepherd University will host a reception on Feb. 8 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. in recognition of the Shepherd faculty art on display in the reading room of the Scarborough Library Feb. 1 through 26.

The reception and exhibit are free and open to the public. The exhibit, which is part of the Scarborough Society Art and Lecture Series at Shepherd, features a variety of media, including photography, painting, sculpture and collage.

"The exhibit offers a wide diversity of work within the realm of contemporary art," said Michael Mendez, adjunct professor in the Shepherd University Department of Contemporary Art and Theater and coordinator for the exhibit.

More information is available by calling the Shepherd University Foundation at (304) 876-5397.
Shepherd University announces faculty research forum speakers and topics

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. — Shepherd University’s Faculty Research Forum will begin Wednesday, Feb. 24 with Robert Willgoos, associate professor of history. Willgoos will present “United States Relations with China” from 1 to 2 p.m. in the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies Auditorium.

Given the rapid rate of change, productivity, and population growth, China is becoming a critically important nation to the United States in terms of world economics, politics, and culture. The presentation will summarize and illustrate current events in China, based on scholarly trips to China. Observations on political climate in China and Tibet, Chinese economics and comparisons with India and Japan, and brief descriptions of key aspects of Willgoos’ trip will be included.

The Shepherd Faculty Research Forum will also include Carl Bell, professor of biology, at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 24, with “A Research Retrospective” and Ed Snyder, professor and chair of environmental studies, and Clarissa Mathews, assistant professor of environmental studies, at noon on Thursday, April 15, with “The Renewable Energy Demonstration Site at Shepherd University: Enhancing Shepherd’s Curriculum through Real World Applications of Green Technologies” in the Robert C. Byrd Center for Science and Technology, room 108, Robert C. Byrd Renewable Energy Demo site.
Shepherd Rotaract to help Haiti relief efforts with sale

SHEPHERDSTOWN — The Shepherd University Rotaract will be hosting a bake sale on Tuesday to raise money to assist a hospital in Haiti. The bake sale will be held at 10 a.m. Tuesday at the Ram’s Den.

Donations will be sent to the Hospital Albert Schweitzer, which is located approximately 50 miles north of Port-au-Prince, an 80-patient facility that has been struggling to care for more than 500 patients since a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit the island Jan. 12.

Rotaract will be partnering with the Shepherdstown Rotary, which has already raised $7,500 in the past week. Holly Frye, director of student community services and service learning, and a member of the Shepherdstown Rotary, said that donations are being accepted for the bake sale.

Interested parties wishing to support the effort or schedule representatives to visit their office or department, may do so by contacting Frye’s office at (304) 876-5402.

— From staff report

Shepherd University hosts successful event

SHEPHERDSTOWN — A last-minute blood drive held Tuesday at Shepherd University’s Erma Ora Byrd Hall surpassed the initial goal of American Red Cross organizers.

The goal for Tuesday’s drive was 45 pints of blood, and 48 pints were collected, which will help save up to 144 lives, according to Red Cross representatives.

The current area blood supply has drastically decreased because of bad weather and the holiday season, officials said. Type O negative and type B negative blood types have dropped to emergency levels.

The blood drive, sponsored by the office of Student Community Services and Service Learning and the American Red Cross office in Washington County, Maryland, was planned Friday afternoon.

Because of maintenance on the elevator in the Student Center, an alternative location had to be secured at the last minute. Holly Frye, director of student community services and service learning, said that the whole campus came together to pull it off.

Volunteers were also recruited at the last minute. Sheri Fedkiw, donor resource field representative for the American Red Cross, said that eight students were recruited to help staff on Tuesday.

The next blood drive will be held in April.

— From staff report

Speaker plans talk at Shepherd

SHEPHERDSTOWN — Shepherd will host Carol Geary Schneider, president of the American Association of Colleges and Universities, in a series of presentations and dialogues in the Erma Ora Byrd Auditorium.

The series is set to begin at 3 p.m. Feb. 3 for faculty, staff and community members.

AAC&U is the leading national association concerned with the quality, vitality and public standing of undergraduate liberal education. As part of the curricular reform process, Shepherd has used AAC&U as a source of information on undergraduate curricular change, how colleges are changing to meet the needs of the new global economy, general education reform, student learning outcomes assessment, diversity in higher education and global issues in higher education.

A team of faculty members attended an AAC&U conference on general education and curricular reform last June in Minnesota.

One of the major initiatives under Schneider’s leadership has been the launch of Liberal Education and America’s Promise, a 10-year public advocacy and campus action initiative designed to engage students and the public with what really matters in a college education for the 21st century. While AAC&U vice president in the 1990s, Schneider headed a major initiative at AAC&U on higher education and U.S. pluralism — American Commitments: Diversity, Democracy and Liberal Learning.

Schneider has published extensively on all the major areas of her educational work and has taught at the University of Chicago, DePaul University, Chicago State University and Boston University.

Schneider is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College with a bachelor’s degree in history. She studied at the University of London’s Institute for Historical Research and earned a Ph.D. in history from Harvard University. She has also received honorary degrees from Towson University, Wagner College, Westminster College, Prince George’s Community College and the College of Wooster.
Panel discussion addresses education

SHEPHERDSTOWN — Four panel members spoke to a nearly packed auditorium Tuesday night during the Martin Luther King Jr. discussion panel, hosted by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, at Shepherd University's Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies.

The panel members included Tom Segar, assistant vice president for student affairs and director of residence life at Shepherd; Solomon Wright, of Martinsburg, a local activist for social change and teacher in Berkeley County Schools; Dorothy Davis, of Bunker Hill, who attended the 1963 March on Washington, D.C.; and Tiffany Claiborne, a May 2009 graduate of Shepherd from Frederick, Md., and a former member of the Multicultural Leadership Team.

The topic of discussion for the evening was the legacy of King and how he impacted their lives and the roles they currently play in their communities.

All of the panel members, who are educators or mentors, addressed the need for education on black history not only once a year, but throughout the curriculum.

Davis said that King made her more aware of the plight of other individuals for social justice.

“He made me give back more than I would in normal circumstances,” Davis said.

The speakers encouraged the audience, who was made up of Shepherd students as well as high school students, to think of themselves as drum majors, as Dr. King did. “You are capable of being leaders,” Davis said. Claiborne said that she strives to have social justice for everyone, and that through King’s example, she wants to respect everyone the same way she expects to be respected.

“The influence of Dr. King made me thirsty for knowledge,” Wright said. “You don’t understand the influence you have while you’re in college. You have the wisdom and strength to be an unstoppable force.”
Shepherd forum planned for Feb. 24

SHEPHERDTOWN — Shepherd University’s Faculty Research Forum will begin Feb. 24 with Robert Willgoos, associate professor of history, presenting “United States Relations with China” from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. in the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies auditorium.

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Scarborough Society to tour D.C. newseum

SHEPHERDSTOWN — The Scarborough Society of Shepherd University and the Shepherd University Foundation will sponsor a bus tour to the Newseum in Washington, D.C., June 3. The bus will depart from Shepherd at 9:30 a.m. and return at approximately 6 p.m.

The trip will include lunch at the Newseum by Wolfgang Puck Catering services; a special presentation by John Splaine, consultant, and Rich Foster, education/special programs director; and time to explore the exhibits.

Located in the heart of D.C., the Newseum combines news history with modern technology and interactive displays.

Along with several permanent galleries, the Newseum will be showcasing such special exhibits as “Tim Russert’s News Office,” “G-Men and Journalists,” “First Dogs: Presidential Pets,” and “Elvis! His Groundbreaking, Hip-Shaking, Newsmaking Story.”

The cost of the tour, including lunch, is $75 per person and is open to the public. Reservations must be made by May ‘11. For more information, contact Phyllis Smock at (304) 264-0560. To learn more about the Newseum, visit www.newseum.org.
Research forum set

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Shepherd students serve community

SHEPHERDSTOWN, WV—Students took to the classroom, as well as a local soup kitchen to serve others as part of Shepherd University's A Day On Not a Day Off: Day of Service to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Monday.

Members of the Multicultural Leadership Team (MLT) disinfected classrooms at Ranson Elementary and North Jefferson Elementary schools. The rest of the day was spent at Trinity 6:34, a weekly worship service and community meal gathering at Trinity United Methodist Church in Martinsburg. While there, students helped prepare food, make sleeping bags out of donated materials, and serve the nearly 100 people who attend the dinner each week.

Naomi Lockley, a sophomore at Shepherd from Ashburn, Virginia, said that she had fun despite working on what would otherwise be a day off.

"I like helping out," Lockley said.

Lockley, a music education major, said that assisting in the classrooms on Monday showed her just how much work goes into being a teacher.

"It was time well spent," Lockley said.

Sophia Khan, a sophomore biology major from Shepherdstown, said that it was nice to put time to good use.

Kareem Khondary, a junior political science major from Martinsburg, said that he would otherwise be at home sleeping.

"But I'm actually doing something," Khondary said.

Gregory Khan, a senior business and economics dual major from Trinidad Tobago, was serving his fourth consecutive year with the MLT.

Not only does Khan feel that it's worthwhile, but said that the opportunity to serve is "a whole different experience unless you do it."

Christina Johnson, director of Multicultural Student Affairs and Disability Support Services, said that with a team of so many, it's hard to keep everyone busy, but the day went well despite the size.

The MLT is a scholarship-based organization. According to Johnson, 45 scholarships are given each semester that pay 25-75 percent of the recipients' tuition and room expenses. The scholarship is open to any full-time undergraduate, degree-seeking student.

Johnson said that the focus of the day of service was to make an impact.

"They really appreciated the opportunity to engage with the community and see how their efforts benefited others," Johnson said. "Not only did we do work, but we had fun volunteering as a team."
Film Society announces spring schedule

The Shepherdstown Film Society is pleased to announce a schedule of five films for spring, 2010. As with the past two seasons, we continue the partnership with the Scarborou...
‘Better deal’ in the works for horsemen?

By Delegate John Doyle

Senator Herb Snyder has introduced a bill that would make significant changes in the way the owners of thoroughbred racehorses are compensated. The bill has been introduced in the House of Delegates, as one of the sponsors.

The introduction of this bill is a direct response to complaints I’ve heard from many local horsemen. The term “horsemen” refers technically to those men and women who own racehorses. Since almost all trainers own some of the horses they train, it encompasses several hundred people, many of whom train thoroughbreds for their entire livelihood.

There is a fund called the “10-10-10 Fund,” established in statute for many years now, that provides money to West Virginia horsemen when they win any “non-restricted” races run at either of West Virginia’s two thoroughbred racetracks, or anywhere in the state. The West Virginia Racing Commission has been given an opinion by the state’s Attorney General that the incidental money from the purses at thoroughbred racetracks is not subject to the tax.

This fund is different than the thoroughbred breeders’ fund, which provides money to owners of thoroughbreds who do well in races restricted to West Virginia bred horses. Each horse track runs one or two “restricted” races each day. The bulk of the races are non-restricted. These are similar funds for dog owners and breeders.

The 10-10-10 Fund provides an extra ten percent (over and above) the money going to the winning horse if the owner is a bona fide West Virginia resident at the time of the race. It also gives an extra ten percent to the breeder of that horse and an extra ten percent to the owner of the horse’s sire (male parent), provided in each case the person is a bona fide West Virginia resident at the time of the race.

I am aware of the blatant sex discrimination manifested in the structure of this fund. Someday I shall attempt to correct that, but there are far more urgent problems with this fund at the moment. The 10-10-10 Fund gets its money from unclaimed pari-mutuel tickets. These are tickets bought with wagers on races. Sometimes people who win don’t realize it. The tickets are only good for six months. However, the Fund is way short of money needed to pay people it owes. Right now there is about $1.5 million in the Fund, but horsemen are owed about $4 million. The West Virginia Racing Commission has been given an opinion by the state’s Attorney General that the incidental money from purses at thoroughbred racetracks is not subject to the tax.

We needed to pay off the Workers’ Comp Fund so we could privatize that system. The money we got from racing and other industries was intended to put us on a definite path to eliminating the unfunded liability after 20 years. We’re actually many years ahead of that schedule. Senator Snyder’s bill proposes to capture enough of the money taken from the purses to pay off the money owed in the 10-10-10 Fund. This will extend the time period for completely paying off the Workers’ Comp Fund by less than a month! When Workers’ Comp is fully paid off, no more money would be taken from the Purse Fund except that going to the 10-10-10 Fund. Also, the Table Games Purse Fund would be renoed to provide that the money from the purses at thoroughbred racetracks would go to purses at the track from which it came. Presently the money from the two horse tracks is “pooled” and divided evenly between Mountaineer and Charles Town. Since Charles Town is expected to produce twice as much money as Mountaineer from table games, this is unfair to horsemen at Charles Town. When we passed the “better deal” table games bill past summer, we were unable to correct these very egregious wrongs perpetrated on horsemen by state law. Senator Snyder and I promised the horsemen at Charles Town we would work very hard this year to fix them. That is the purpose of this bill.

Delegate John Doyle, D-Jefferson, represents the 57th District in the West Virginia House of Delegates.