

Student Government won tuition battle

A week ago the Board of Regents agreed (unanimously) with its special committee on fees to impose at least a one-year freeze on tuition costs for the University of Nevada System.

The tuition fight was one that Student Body President Joel Kostman had been warned not to undertake. Former student leaders had warned him; university administrators had warned him; regents had warned him. The fight couldn't be won, they had said.

But Kostman was unfazed. He believes tuition increases for UNS schools should be based on the needs of Nevada students not WICHE (the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education—a system that comes up with regional cost averages) students.

True, the costs of higher education are rising; and UNLV students enjoy relatively low tuition costs (UNLV will be included in "101 Best Values in America's Colleges and Universities," a book from the Center for Studies in College Enrollment and Tuition Issues). But tuition has gone up each of the last four years—35 percent since 1988—at a faster rate than the national cost of living. Students attending a university are making a large investment. They need to be able to plan ahead.

A student, matriculating to UNLV as a freshman in 1988 paid \$36 per credit. Today that same student is paying \$55.50. It's doubtful that student's sources of income have grown at the same rate.

With tuition frozen for next year, this student finally gets a break—of sorts. It is students like this that Kostman was fighting for, students that have gone through—and paid for—multiple tuition hikes.

Now the regents have adopted what they think is a second solution to the problem of rising costs vs. static student income (from jobs, scholarships, financial aid, etc.). The new policy will have 50 percent of the revenue generated by the fee increases in 1993 deposited into a student financial aid fund.

This is great for financial aid students. But what about students that don't receive grants or scholarships? In a sense, funneling 50 percent of the funds gained by the increase gives the impression that only half of the increase was actually necessary. It's as if extra money is being paid by all students and given back to some. It seems as though the 50 percent figure was arrived at arbitrarily.

Kostman, who still hopes to extend the current moratorium to two years, wants future fee increases to be limited to a 5.4-percent Consumer Price Index increase (equal to cost of living increases); the regents have said they will at least stick to single-digit increases in the future. This makes much more sense than implementing an increase and then returning part of it to part of the student body.

Issues such as tuition increases that affect students greatly shouldn't be kicked around like political footballs, only to be picked up when they're obviously favorable.

Most regents and administrators now say they favor the tuition freeze. But how many have been in the trenches fighting for it all along?

Kostman led Student Government through the trenches and came away with a victory.

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Paying not as easy as registering

by Joseph E. Scillia

So registration went smoothly. TOUCH has simplified the process and the whole system gets better every year (or so they tell me).

Though it may be easy to register or to find out which classes are still open, but paying for these classes on top of out-of-state tuition is a totally different matter. If you have the money, in cash immediately, everything is a piece of cake. However, judging from the long lines at the financial aid office, more than a few of us are not financially set. As a consequence, the peaks and valleys of the not-so-smooth road to relief, otherwise known as fee payment, become obstacles.

Rapper KRS-ONE calls capitalism, of which the university systems are a part, a "system of pimps and hoes." And when you look in the UNLV Fall Class Schedule book, it gives you the strict deadlines: "Give up that money by September 4, ho, or we'll drop you from classes." They don't care if your grandmother just died, or if you were just admitted into school a week before classes started. They want

the money by September 4, and in bold, black type they emphasize "NO EXCEPTIONS."

O.K., I see that they need \$20 million by Sept. 4, because they're building a new research lab or a new cloning machine or something else really important on Sept. 5. So out of consideration I go up to the dreaded third floor of the Humanities Building for financial assistance. Then after enough time has elapsed for my fifth child to be born, they finally call my name. I wipe the cobwebs from my body and enter the counselor's office. We go through all of the typical small talk. I tell her my situation — how much money I made last year, how much my father made, how much financial aid I received from my previous university, and so on and so on. She, in turn, tells me what to expect and hands me the forms so that the government can verify my poverty. Now if all goes according to plan, she explains that I will receive the money sometime in October or November.

"Sometime in October or November?!" I cringe, "But I need the money by Sept. 4." Needless to say, I am sounding more and

more like a ho by the minute. I ask her what I should do, but she only gives me a look of mock concern — a look that she is well-practiced with. The bottom line is that there is nothing I can do but wait, like a ho.

At my other university (University of Alabama) they give you a form called an Anticipated Aid Form. This verifies that you are getting financial aid and defers your fees until that aid comes in. No such system seems to exist here.

If I had \$3,000 by Sept. 4 (a week later), I wouldn't need aid. How does the university expect me to pay the money? They already know that the money won't be available for a couple of months?

The answer is simple: They don't care how we get the money, but they expect us, hoes, to cough it up by Sept. 4."

A fee deferment system must be set up as a courtesy to students who don't have bags of money laying around. I have a 3.7 G.P.A. and a 0.0 I.P.A. (Income Point Average.) So give us, hoes, a break, please!

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How was Wednesday's debate?

This is an open letter to faculty, students and anyone who attended the Censorship Debate with Professor Griff and Jack Thompson Wednesday at Artemus Ham Hall.

This is an opportunity for our educators to submit their impressions of what happened. Tell us how real world issues like censorship affect what is taught in the classroom. Tell us how well the debate was conducted as far as content and technicality are concerned. Tell us what side of the debate you are on and why.