

Student loans become campaign issue

(CPS)—Financial aid is emerging as a major campaign issue for college and university students as President Bush and his Democratic rival, Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton, actively court the youth vote.

Representatives of college organizations for the Democratic and Republican parties agree that student loans and funding for higher education are fundamental issues facing both candidates. What they disagree about is how to make college more accessible to more people.

"The biggest problem students face right now is funding and student loan debt," said Jamie Harmon, president of the College Democrats. "We now have a situation where some

people aren't able to go to their school of choice or school at all because of lack of money. If they can get through, they're burdened with debt."

Tony Zagotta, president of the College Republicans, agreed that loans are a major issue facing students, but defended Bush's administration and its higher-education programs. Bush has proposed increasing the availability of student loans, but wants to cut back on the funding for grants.

"Democrats charge that this administration has been unfavorable to student loans. This is simply false," he said. "More is being given out than (in) any other administration."

Zagotta also slammed

Clinton's proposed national trust for higher education. Clinton has proposed a two-fold program to make higher education affordable. Students taking out government-guaranteed loans could pay them off through payroll deductions, or they could perform community service for two years.

"These don't have a lot of appeal. Young people want to enter the job market when they get out of college. They want choices and opportunity," Zagotta said. "While community service may sound fine, many would want to do other things."

Harmon described Clinton's plan as "revolutionary," saying the plan could "harness student idealism." If the plan is enacted,

students could get jobs they really want to take after graduating from school, rather than feeling pressured to take a high-paying job they don't want in order to pay off school debts, Harmon said. "Debt affects their first jobs," he said.

Also looming for Bush and the Republican Party are national polls that indicate young people are favoring the Democratic ticket, although some of the president's supporters refute those findings.

With five weeks left in the campaign, polls showed Clinton had pulled ahead of Bush in popularity. Polls among young people—those between 18 and 24—show strong support for the Democratic Party and Clinton. Some of the results include:

- A *Washington Post*-ABC poll found that 61 percent of the respondents between the ages of 18 and 24 described themselves as Democrats, while 31 percent called themselves Republicans.

- A poll of registered voters under the age of 25 for *The New York Times* and CBS found that 55 percent of those polled defined themselves as Democrats and 37 percent as Republicans.

- *The Wall Street Journal* and NBC conducted a survey in August and found 53 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds polled called themselves Democrats, compared with 26 percent who called themselves Republicans.

Mike Dabadie, a project director for Wirthlin Group in Washington, which is a survey firm that works for conservative groups and the Republican Party, acknowledged that Clinton is ahead in every age group polled.

However, he said Bush is getting the most support from the 18-24 age group. "There is no question that many people think our nation is off in the wrong direction," he said. "But data indicates younger voters identify with conservatism."

Election Board receives Homecoming complaints

Sen. Mike Young (liberal arts) asked for an emergency motion for the appointment of four members to the CSUN Elections Board. The proposed members, Sen. Brad Jackson, Mike Bunin, Mike Kennedy and Kara Shippee, are necessary for the board to do business, Young said.

The board will meet today at 7 p.m. in the Fireside Lounge of the Moyer Student Union to hear "one formal complaint" about allegations of "one organization tearing down posters," Young said.

Another complaint may be brought against a homecoming queen candidate who allegedly campaigned before the beginning of the campaign period. The allegation stems from an ad published in a *Derby Days* flyer, according to Kennedy, Nevada Student Affairs Director.

—Paul Stuhff

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