



OHLONE COLLEGE MONITOR

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Loans cut, but grants up

By SANDEEP ABRAHAM
Staff writer

In a bittersweet turn of events for students, the House voted to increase the amount of money awarded by the Pell Grant, but at the cost of the Federal Student Loans Program, which is being eliminated in accordance with the Bush administration's Fiscal Budget for 2008. Both the Pell Grant and the Perkins Loan function as a source of educational funds for more than 5 million students from low and middle-income families. The continuation, if not increase, of both are vital for students facing the growing cost of higher education.

To many students of Ohlone and other community colleges, a development like this is pretty momentous. One of the main reasons students choose to attend a community college before transferring to a four-year institution is because it's cheaper. For many of those who have filed their FAFSA forms and found that they were "too rich" to receive any aid - it's because the eligible family income range for a Pell Grant is \$0-3850. Very few families who file for FAFSA are actually eligible to receive a Pell Grant. Because of this, many students choose to apply for federal loans, the most popular of which come from the Perkins program.

However, this is somewhat good news for Ohlone. "Ohlone doesn't participate in the Perkins Loan Program because those loans go through [independent] lenders," said Joanne Schultz, financial aid adviser. "But with a student population of roughly 10,000, there are a lot more applications for the Pell Grant. [The lack of student loans] won't affect Ohlone as much as diminish the access students have to Ohlone." While those students who do receive Pell Grants would stand to gain a lot more, those dependent on loans from government-subsidized independent lenders would have a harder time raising funds.

The Bush administration aims to eliminate the Perkins program and use the money saved from that to supplement the Pell Grant by about \$20 billion. With this reallocation of funds, the maximum grant award is expected to rise by \$260 to \$4,310 in 2007. One of the reasons for this is that the administration wants to decrease subsidies to independent loan agencies to reduce student

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Flying high into first place

Bert Whittington (No. 11) leaps toward the basket as Renardo Bass (No. 1) boxes out a Chabot player. The Renegades rolled over the Chabot Gladiators 76-61 Saturday to maintain their number one spot in the Coast Conference standings. The win also served as redemption as Chabot handed Ohlone their only conference loss and ended a 16-game winning streak in early January. See story on Page 8.

Photo by Destiny Harrison

Explosion from chemical disposal shocks students

By ANNA NEMCHUK
Editor-in-chief

An explosion of a chemical previously used in artillery shell fillings shook Ohlone, setting off car alarms and unnerving students on Tuesday, Feb. 6.

About 25 grams of partly crystallized picric acid was detonated by the Alameda County Sheriff's Bomb Squad between the tennis and soccer fields on the Fremont campus, according to Patrice Birkedahl, college relations director.

The substance was found in a classroom cupboard where it had evidently been forgotten by a retired engineering professor. After one of the people cleaning out the cupboards noticed the acid, normally suspended in liquid, had dried out somewhat, possibly rendering it highly explosive, the bottle was taken to the hazardous materials storage shed near Building 10.

Decon Environmental, the company that takes care of Ohlone's hazardous material disposal, recommended the Fremont Fire Department be called.

Eventually, the Bomb Squad was contacted and, after some deliberation, notified President Doug Treadway's office of the intended explosion, which took place at around 6:10 p.m. said Birkedahl.

"It's an explosion. I don't know why we had it on campus, I'm not sure anybody knows," she added.

Picric acid was used extensively in World War I for munitions. It was one of the main causes of the devastating 1917 Halifax Explosion of the ship Mont-Blanc in Nova Scotia, Canada - the largest artificial explosion until the first atomic bomb test - that killed about 2,000 people and injured over 9,000.

In the laboratory, it is utilized for staining samples and as a chemical reagent. While wet, the chemical is classified as a flammable solid, however, when containing less than 30 percent water, it is considered a class A high explosive.

"This was apparently here for a long enough time - fortunately, it was clearly labeled," said Birkedahl. She added that the chemical was not part of regular inventory, which Ohlone carefully keeps track of and that the incident and proper ways of handling it will be discussed at the semester's first Safety Committee meeting led by Campus Police Chief Steve Osawa on Tuesday, Feb. 13 at 3 p.m. in Room 5209.

This is the second explosion-related occurrence at Ohlone in the past two weeks. An incendiary device was discovered in the lower parking lot on Jan. 22. It was not detonated and was disposed of off campus.

Student a Demo delegate

By MICHAEL ABURAS
Staff writer

Former two-term Associated Students of Ohlone College (ASOC) senator Alex Hilke will be attending the California Democratic Convention in April. Hilke won 32 out of 49 votes in the 20th California assembly district, which gained him a seat in San Diego. There are 12 seats in the delegation; six reserved for men and six for women.

Hilke was asked by his friend Trisha Tahmasbi to run for a delegate. "She thought I should run because she knows my long-term goal is to serve in politics," said Hilke. Tahmasbi was one of Assemblyman Alberto Torrico's field representatives and Hilke's boss during Torrico's 2006 campaign for the 20th District of California.

"I was an intern for the assembly member from November 2005 through July 2006," said Hilke. During 2006, Hilke became assistant campaign coordinator for the Tri-City area. In addition, Hilke registered online on the Democratic party's website and attended the meeting at the Golden Peacock in Fremont to give a one minute speech to compete for votes. "I had a speech written, but it was so long I had to go off cuff. I gave a very passionate speech in comparison to the others that were given," Hilke said.

Passion is what Hilke believes won him the seat at the delegation. Hilke's speech covered his service with the ASOC, United Democratic Campaign (UDC), "and what an honor it would be to go down there (San Diego) and serve."

Hilke's major is political science and, according to him, "Me being overly idealistic, would like to see the good I can do being president." However, Hilke feels a more realistic goal is Governor of California.

Hilke says his political ambition was inspired by three major things. The first is the inspiration he got from his mother, "My mom has always been active in environmental issues and social issues." Also, Hilke's favorite hero growing up was Abraham Lincoln.

But the event that made up Hilke's mind to go into politics was the election of 2000. "The day the election was stolen November 7th 2000," said Hilke. "It was then and there that I said 'never again,' that's when I went all in."

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