WASHINGTON, DC, November 3, 2004, 3:00pm — Americans voted yesterday in record numbers, and although it took a little time, George W. Bush and his Administration will return for a second four-year term, something his father was unable to do 12 years before.

The Bush team showed that the polls were more accurate than many pundits and Democrats would have believed. Bush won the plurality of the vote with approximately 51 percent of the popular vote and over 53 million votes. He also won almost every state that he carried in 2000, including the all important Florida vote, and quite possibly the Ohio Electoral votes.

At 11:00 am this morning, Senator John Kerry (D-MA) conceded the election to the President, stating that he hoped that the healing could start immediately for the nation. With a few states still up for grabs, President Bush ended up 274 electoral votes, 4 more than needed to hold office. Senator Kerry finished with 252. Although a few more votes may come his way, the outcome has been decided.

The President will hold on to his office, but the next four years will provide him with the greatest of challenges. The US currently has a record deficit, with projections of much greater deficits to come. The war in Iraq is barely in control with no guarantee of getting better anytime in the near future and spending to reach at least $225 billion and quite possibly higher over the next several years. Perhaps the (continued on Page 3)
Pathways to College Network
Release New Online “Toolbox”

The Pathways to College Network (PCN) has created a systematic, research-based resource to help schools and college outreach programs increase the number of students preparing for postsecondary education. The *College Readiness for All: A Practitioner's Toolbox* helps educators:

- Learn about what works from research and examples.
- Assess their present situations and plan change.
- Access resources for implementation

Each section provides a user’s guide, presentations, checklists, inventories and assessment tools to create awareness, assess the current situation, develop a plan for improvement, implement a plan and evaluate success.

The Pathways to College Network is a national alliance of organizations committed to using research-based knowledge to improve college access and success for underserved populations, including low-income students, students who are the first in their families to go to college, underrepresented minorities, and students with disabilities. Visit [www.pathwaystocollege.net](http://www.pathwaystocollege.net) for more information.

The Educational Policy Institute, underwritten by a grant from the Lumina Foundation for Education, is developing a campus-based retention audit system for two- and four-year colleges and universities.

- EPI has put together an Advisory Committee for this project, who will meet in San Juan, PR, this December to set the project in motion. Advisory Committee members include:
  - Patrick Terenzini, Professor, Penn State University, University Park, PA
  - Alberto Cabrera, Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI
  - Richard Voorhees, President, The Voorhees Group, Littleton, CO
  - Martin Carroll, audit director, Australian Universities Quality Agency, Melbourne, Australia
  - Derek Price, education consultant, Indianapolis, IN
  - John Lee, President, JBL Associates, Bethesda, MD
  - John Villamil, Vice President, ASPIRA, Washington, DC
  - José R. Figueroa-Britapaja, Ph.D., Assistant Vice Chancellor, Universidad del Este, Carolina, Puerto Rico

  The meeting will be chaired by the project’s Principal Investigator, EPI President Watson Scott Swail. Also participating will be EPI Vice President Alex Usher and EPI Research Associates Amy Cervenan and Adriane Williams.

  The meeting will allow project staff to pursue development of the audit with input from the advisory committee. Once a beta-audit is developed, it will be tested with 6-8 community colleges and universities in the US and Canada. Completion of the audit is anticipated in early 2006.
biggest problem the President has to face is his inability to cut back government spending in a time of tax cuts and war-time spending.

This is all precursor to education funding. The Bush Administration actually increased US Department of Education funding by 58 percent during his first term, raising federal funding to $66 billion. As well, the percentage of education funding compared to the total federal budget rose to 2.8 percent from an average of 2.0 percent during the Clinton Administration. The total ED budget increased 61 percent between 2000 and 2005 (projected). Funding for No Child Left Behind programs increased from $14 billion to $25 billion, an increase of 42 percent. Spending for IDEA (Special Education) increased 103 percent, total funding for ESEA increased 68 percent, and funding for postsecondary education increased 52 percent, from $11 billion to $17 billion.

Within postsecondary education, Pell Grant funding rose 47 percent, but that large increase only allowed the program to maintain a $4,050 maximum Pell level. The total postsecondary budget through the US Department of Education increased by 36 percent to $57 billion in FY 2005.

While critics argue that NCLB remains largely an “unfunded mandate,” President Bush did manage to put funding into Education, a stark comparison with the president whom he perhaps most admired (with exception of his father), Ronald Reagan, who tried to eliminate the US Department of Education in the 1980s.

Most postsecondary educators and policy analysts felt that Bush largely ignored higher education during his first term, spending all his education capital on No Child Left Behind. Because this will be the President’s second and final term, it will be his opportunity to carve out his final legacy. Historically, this is when education is often highlighted, which may raise expectations for some. However, the Iraq war has the potential to alter tradition, and the country will have to wait and see how that tail wags the rest of the federal budget and Administration focus.

EPI Releases New Measure of Educational Equity

This September, EPI Canada released an eleven-country, ten-province study on equitable access to higher education in which Canada ranks third behind Ireland and the Netherlands. The most recent study in the Canada Higher Education Research Series, it finds that Manitoba and Ontario outperform other jurisdictions.

The report, *A New Measuring Stick: Is Access to Higher Education in Canada Equitable?*, is the first to attempt to quantify how well different jurisdictions fare in terms of ensuring equitable access to university to students from different socio-economic backgrounds, through use of the Educational Equity Index (EEI). The EEI measures the relative degree of social stratification of the university student population by looking at the proportion of students whose fathers have university credentials and comparing it to the proportion of the overall male population aged 45-64 with university credentials. The higher the EEI score, the more equitable access to university is in a given jurisdiction. The study’s main findings include:

- Within Canada, Manitoba and Ontario have the highest EEI scores while Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland have the lowest.
- Internationally, the Netherlands has the highest EEI score, followed by Ireland and Canada. Germany, Austria and Belgium had the lowest EEI scores.
- A jurisdiction’s EEI score does not appear to be affected by tuition fees, affordability levels, or overall participation rates. The causes of variation between jurisdictions remain unknown.

Acknowledging that access to higher education is not simply a matter of how many students go the author explores how composition of the student body reflects access in an inter-jurisdictional perspective. Following a brief description of differing views of ‘access’ to higher education, the author motivates a new measure of equality of educational opportunity. Preliminary analysis of these data consider the affordability of education and system size, neither of which correlate at the jurisdiction level.

The report author concludes: “While Canada’s record in providing access to university education is reasonably good, there are no grounds for complacency. The reality stipulates that tuition typically accounts for only one quarter to one half of the costs of going to postsecondary education. Thus, financial aid responding to students’ living costs that is packaged with the tuition policies is important.”

The full report is available online at: www.educationalpolicy.org/pdf/measuringstick.pdf

The Impact of Tuition Policies on Access & Affordability

The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation released a report this August produced by the Educational Policy Institute entitled *Changes in Tuition Policy: Natural Policy Experiments in Five Countries*. The report studies tuition policy changes in 10 jurisdictions, including three US states and four Canadian provinces, plus Ireland, Britain, and Australia. The study concludes that although tuition reduction policies can reduce the financial burden on students and families, they have limited ability to influence access due to a number of competing factors.

According to Dr. Watson Scott Swail, President of EPI and lead author of the report, this is an important point that politicians often miss. “If tuition fees alone were responsible for access and affordability issues, we would know what to do and how to do it. Reality stipulates that tuition typically accounts for only one quarter to one half of the costs of going to postsecondary education. Thus, financial aid responding to students’ living costs that is packaged with the tuition policies is important.”

But the report also notes that tuition policies aimed at increasing access to postsecondary education are often
Recent and Upcoming Publications

(continued from Page 4)

misappropriated. “Many governments that reduce or freeze tuition fees expect to increase access to postsecondary education,” says Swail. “But this can only happen when the number of seats or spaces for students is expanded.” Swail adds that tuition policies which reduce, freeze, or eliminate tuition fees, as in the case of Ireland, often become a subsidy for affluent university students.

For further information on this report, please visit www.educationalpolicy.org or www.millenniumscholarships.ca. The report was coauthored by Dr. Donald Heller, a professor at Pennsylvania State University.

Meeting the Need

In August, the Educational Policy Institute announced the release of “Meeting the Need: A New Architecture for Canada’s Student Financial Aid System” co-authored by EPI Vice-President Alex Usher, with Dr. Ross Finnie of Queen’s University in Kingston and Hans Vossensteyn of the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies in the Netherlands. The monograph, published by the Institute for Research on Public Policy in Montreal, builds on an earlier work by Dr. Finnie that was published in Policy Options last September.

The “New Architecture” described by Finnie, Usher, and Vossensteyn analyzes the weaknesses of the present system of student aid in Canada and suggests ways to simplify and improve the existing system of student aid while limiting student indebtedness for college and first-degree students. Among the main points:

- Over $2 billion in subsidies that are currently distributed on a non-need basis, including education savings programs and tax credits, should be abolished and converted into a much more generous system of need-based assistance.
- Need assessment systems should be made more generous to include more middle-income families.
- Assistance limits should be raised so as to cover all reasonable costs, if necessary.
- After need has been assessed, the first five thousand dollars should be provided to students as a loan, the balance as a grant.
- In order to ensure that no student is denied access for financial reasons, a supplemental loan program should be established to provide loans for students whose parents cannot or will not meet their expected contribution. In order to discourage unnecessary use of this fund, these loans would not carry an interest subsidy.

The benefits of this architecture are many. It ensures that the student aid system is much more progressive than is currently the case.

The publication is available from the IRPP website at www.irpp.org or at www.educationalpolicy.org.

Price of Knowledge 2004

The Price of Knowledge 2004: Access and Student Finance in Canada is a new publication in the Millennium Research Series of the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. Designed to serve the needs of college and university administrators, student leaders, social policy experts, government decision-makers and career counselors, it is a comprehensive fact book on the key issues surrounding student access to post-secondary studies and financial aid, combining existing with original research.
In April 2005, The National Latino Education Summit will showcase the latest research on issues impacting the education of Latinos in the United States. Featured research topics include K-12 educational achievement, NCLB and the impact on Latino children, bilingual education achievement results, the use of technology by Latino children and families, pathways and college access, dropout and retention issues at the college level, and access to graduate schools and the professions. In addition to the traditional conference deliberations, the summit will also feature a national press conference detailing the latest results of the most up-to-date research.

Keynote speakers and presenters include Dr. Watson Scott Swail, Educational Policy Institute, Dr. Elsa Macías, Director of Research for the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, Dr. Rafael Aragunde, Chancellor, University of Puerto Rico at Cayey, Dr. Sarita Brown, Senior Fellow, Pew Hispanic Center and Executive Director, Excelencia in Education, Inc., and Roberto Suro, Director, Pew Hispanic Center.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

For more information on The Latino Institute, hotel accommodations, and conference brochure, please contact Carmen Torres, Conference Coordinator, at 973-481-0415 X 24 or via e-mail at ctorres346@optonline.net. Conference invitation and registration forms will be posted at www.latinoinsitute.net.
ACCESSIBILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM
Moscow, Russia

On June 29-30, 2004, at the kind invitation of the Independent Institute for Social Policy (Moscow) and the International Comparative Higher Education Finance and Accessibility Project (SUNY-Buffalo), EPI Vice-President Alex Usher participated in the international conference “Accessibility of Higher Education: Challenges for Transition Countries” in Moscow. With support from the Ford Foundation, the project has explored dimensions of access to higher education in the Russian Federation, and the conference was called in order to exchange information about cost-sharing and the development of student loan programs. Mr. Usher chaired a session on access to higher education in Russian and shared his own work on the role of parents in providing educational funding for students. Papers from the conference may be found at: www.socpol.ru/ennews/conf_ed.shtml.

CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY STUDIES (CHEPS) 20th ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE
University of Twente, Enschede, Netherlands

Dr. Swail attended the 20th anniversary conference of CHEPS on September 16, 2004 in Enschede, Netherlands. The conference was attended by 160 participants from 25 countries to discuss European higher education and research in 2020. Introductory speeches were delivered by Jürgen Enders (CHEPS’ director), Frans van Vught (rector University of Twente) and Renk Roborgh (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science). The focus of the day revolved around three scenarios of future higher education, as designed by CHEPS staff using a large Delphi study. Conference participants were asked to vote on the scenarios. Four keynote speakers, including Kurt Larsen of OECD, Guy Haug of the European Commission, Jamil Salmi of World Bank, and David Dill of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill provided their own thoughts and insights into the scenarios.

IMHE GENERAL CONFERENCE 2004
Paris, France

On September 13-15, The Institutional Management in Higher Education, a division of OECD, held its biennial conference in Paris, France. This year’s conference was titled, “Choices and Responsibilities: Higher Education in the Knowledge Society,” and focused on the challenges faced by higher education in today’s “knowledge society.” Dr. Swail served as one of three rapporteurs for the conference, providing a summary of the three-day event.

CONSORTIUM OF HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCHERS (CHER) ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Enschede, Netherlands

Immediately following the CHEPS Anniversary Conference, Dr. Swail also attended the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers (CHER) conference at the University of Twente from 17-19 September. The conference was attended by more than 100 participants from over 20 countries and about 50 presentations around the theme of “Public-Private Dynamics in Higher Education.” Keynote speakers included Theo Toonen (Leiden University, The Netherlands), Roger Geiger (Penn State University, United States), Hebe Vessuri (Venezuelan Institute of Scientific Research, Venezuela) and Simon Marginson (Monash University, Australia). Next year’s (18th) CHER conference will take place in Jyväskylä, Finland at 1-3 September 2005.

DOURO, Portugal

On October 2-5, EPI vice-president Alex Usher attended the fourth annual Douro Seminar in Pinhao, Portugal. Organized by the Centre for Research in Higher Education Policies in Porto, the meeting brought together top researchers in higher education financing from Canada, the United States, Australia, Norway, France, the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom and Portugal. The conference papers will be published by Kluwer Press in 2005; Alex Usher was co-author (with Ross Finnie of Queen’s University) of a paper entitled: The Canadian Experiment in Cost-Sharing and its Effects on Access to Higher Education, 1990-2002.
WISCAPE Conference
University of Wisconsin
Madison, WI

Dr. Swail attended a special invitational conference on October 5 sponsored by The Wisconsin Center for the Advance of Postsecondary Education (WISCAPE). “Postsecondary Agenda for Policy Relevant P-16 Research” was co-sponsored in part by the Lumina Foundation for Education. Researchers, scholars, policymakers, and policy analysts worked in groups to define a role for postsecondary institutions in conducting P-16 research and informing policy, paying close attention to postsecondary preparation, access, and persistence.

EPI/HACU Retention Conference
Miami, FL

The Educational Policy Institute, in partnership with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) and with financial support from the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation (TG), conducted RETENTION 2004, a retention workshop for higher education professionals. After introductions from HACU president Antoinio Flores and HACU Research Director Alex Ramirez, EPI’s Dr. Swail presented his framework for student retention and led a discussion about promising practices. Mr. Matt Short of TG presented TG’s strategic enrollment management system.

AFRICAN AMERICAN, HISPANIC AND NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT SYMPOSIUM
Educational Testing Service
Princeton, NJ

Dr. Swail attended this special symposium sponsored by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) on October 20-21 in Princeton, NJ. The conference was titled “Addressing Achievement Gaps: Progress and Prospects for Minority and Socio-economically Disadvantaged Students and English Language Learners.”

Pathways to College Research Meeting
Chicago, IL

On October 29, 2004, Dr. Swail participated in the Pathways to College Research Meeting, held in Chicago, Illinois, immediately preceding the College Board’s National Forum. The purpose of the meeting was to develop a research framework for the Pathways initiative in order to provide direction for future research.

Welcome to New EPI Staff Member

The Educational Policy Institute is pleased to announce the addition of Adriane Williams to the staff. Ms. Williams is a dissertator in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Prior to pursuing a Ph.D., she directed an English for speakers of other languages program and worked as a research specialist for the Council of the Great City Schools. She received her M.Ed. in secondary education from the George Washington University and her B.A. in Economics and French from Wellesley College. Ms. Williams is passionate about education which she believes to be the most certain path to changing the social structures in American society that disadvantage low-income people and people of color.

New Publication Coming in November from EPI

The Educational Policy Institute will release a new publication this November called *Value Added: The costs and benefits of college preparatory programs*. The publication is an edited version of a chapter written by EPI President Dr. Watson Scott Swail for the SUNY Press book, Preparing for College, edited by William Tierney, Zoe Corwin, and Julia Colyer.

The report looks at the issue of cost-benefit analysis and the importance of using this procedure in order to get lawmakers to recognize and support pre-college programs. Swail outlines a number of cost benefit studies conducted over the years, and what must
The remarkable diversity in college preparation programs raises a compelling question: With a finite amount of time and resources, which activities are most likely to improve educational achievement for underrepresented youth in the United States? This book defines and analyzes the parameters of effective college outreach programs. Instead of looking at college preparation writ large, contributors focus on various program components, examining how elements such as academic preparation, culture, family, and mentoring operate within the context of preparation programs and how each contributes—or does not contribute—to program success. By engaging with individual program elements, the contributors provide a means for studying, evaluating, and improving them.

"Limitations in educational funding make measurable outcomes even more critical for outreach programs. The authors' arguments for programs that are based on sound theoretical arguments and effective program outcomes will not go unheeded. This is a valuable text for administrators, counselors, researchers, and faculty members who study or participate in programs to improve the achievement of underrepresented youths." — Ken Kemper, coeditor of The Social Role of Higher Education: Comparative Perspectives

At the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis at the University of Southern California, William G. Tierney is Director and the Wilbur-Kleffer Professor of Higher Education. Zoe B. Corwin is Research Assistant, and Julia E. Colyar is Postdoctoral Research Associate. Tierney has written many books, including Increasing Access to College: Extending Possibilities for All Students (coedited with Linda Sera Hagedorn), also published by SUNY Press.

A volume in the SUNY series, Frontiers in Education
Philip G. Altbach, editor

264 pages
Illustrated: 7 tables, 2 figures
$24.95 paperback
$73.50 hardcover
ISBN 0-7914-6275-7

PART I: SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORKS
1. The Role of Culture in College Preparation Programs: A Review of the Research Literature
Octavio Villalpando and Daniel G. Solórzano
2. Toward Developing an Untapped Resource: The Role of Families in College Preparation/William G. Tierney and Susan Auerbach
3. The Role of Peer Groups in College Preparation Programs/William G. Tierney and Julia E. Colyar
4. Counseling Matters: Knowledge, Assistance, and Organizational Commitment in College Preparation/Patricia M. McDonough
5. Putting Your Money Where Your Mouth Is: Mentoring as a Strategy to Increase Access to Higher Education/Patricia Gandara and Maria Melendez

PART II: PROGRAMMATIC ELEMENTS
6. The Key to College Access: Rigorous Academic Preparation/Laura W. Perna
7. Co-curricular Activities and Students' College Prospects: Is There a Connection?/James C. Hearn and Janet M. Holdenworth

Conclusion: Making Sense of What We Know—From Nine Propositions to Future Research and Interventions/Robert Rieds

References/Contributors/Index

ORDER FORM

Tierney et al, Preparing for College

--- @ $24.95 pb 0-7914-6276-5 ---

--- @ $73.50 hc 0-7914-6275-7 ---

NYS residents, add 8.25% sales tax

Canadian residents, add 7% GST

Postage/Handling (see below with)

TOTAL (prepayment is required) __________

Enclosed: □ Check (payable to SUNY Press)
Charge my: □ Visa □ MasterCard □ AmEx □ Discover

Account # ________________________________

Expiration Date __________________

Signature ____________________________

Name ________________________________
Address ______________________________
City ____________________________ State Zip
Phone ______________________________

Postage and Handling: Domestic and Canada add $5.00 for first copy, $1.00 each additional copy. Foreign add $5.50 (U.S.) for first copy, $2.20 (U.S.) each additional copy. Prices subject to change without notice.

www.sunypress.edu
Tuition Prices: History and Future

Ever year, students and parents face tuition fees that rise at least twice that of inflation, making the burden of attending higher education more difficult. Even in consideration of need- and non-need based aid, including federal tax credits, the burden gets harder to carry for most families.

Using data from the College Board’s Annual Survey of Colleges, we looked at tuition and fee data for public and private four-year universities, and public two-year colleges over the past 20 years. Calculating average annual changes in tuition and fees, we projected these values over the course of the next 20 years. Because we cannot possibly project future economic conditions or decisions that Congress and state legislatures make, we carefully warn readers that these data are loose projections at best. Still, they give us an idea of what we may be facing, using historical figures over a relatively long period of time—a time that including recessions and booms—as our guide.

The largest potential increase, percentage-wise, is at public four-year institutions, which experienced a 133 percent increase above inflation between 1984-85 and 2004-05. This increase resulted in a real-value increase from $2,200 to $5,132. At private four-year institutions, a 101 percent increase resulted in a tuition increase from $9,952 to $20,182 between 1984-85 and 2004-05. Finally, public two-year institutions saw tuition and fees rise from $1,046 to $2,076, or 99 percent.

Using these percentage changes from the past 20 years, we project that tuition and fee charges within the three sectors of higher education increases similarly, to $40,523 for private four-year, $11,972 for public four-year, and $4,120 for public two-year institutions in 2024-25. Remember, these are in today’s dollars after projected inflation is considered, and it does not include room and board and other related costs, which, at public four-year institutions, typically run slightly higher than tuition fees, potentially pushing total cost of attendance above $20,000 in today’s dollars for one academic year. Even if average net tuition at a public four-year institution is about 35 percent of total sticker price is considered, that still leaves a $4,000 tuition bill for students and parents after all aid is considered. That’s real money which may force more low-income students to two-year institutions.
This past month, The College Board released its annual *Trends in College Pricing* report, which provides the latest pricing data on two- and four-year public and private colleges in the US. The story this year, as in other years, is that tuition continues to rise well beyond inflation.

According to the College Board report, tuition and fees at a four-year public institution in 2004-05 will reach $5,132, on average—a 10.5 percent increase from last year. At four-year private institutions, prices rose 6 percent to $20,082, and the average tuition charges at community colleges are now $2,076—an 8.7 percent increase. To provide a more fair analysis, the College Board calculated a “net tuition” figure. Based on their analysis, the average student at a four-year public institution will pay about one-third of total tuition costs, or $1,800, of the $5,132 sticker price. This figure takes into consideration average grants and tax benefits. At the four-year private colleges, students paid about 50 percent of total tuition and fee charges, or $10,700. The College Board also found that the average net cost for low-income students did not increase over the past 10 years, which is good news.

Regardless of the net tuition findings, one must be particularly concerned about the consistent rise in tuition prices above inflation. Federal and state governments, along with institutions, have been able to provide enough aid to stop the bleeding, so to speak, of college pricing increases. But exponential rises in tuition and fees put a huge burden on public coffers and students, both of whom are unlikely to keep ground over time. Evidence of this fact can clearly be seen in health care pricing, where costs have risen into the stratosphere and families and companies are forced to cover the gap.

Looking over the past 20 years, the average annual increase in tuition fees at four-year public, private, and two-year public institutions doubled inflation. Given that the inflation rate averaged approximately three percent during that time, this is significant. Even those of us who believe in high tuition–high fee models are in some shock at the large-scale increases in tuition and fee prices at our institutions. Here are some figures based on College Board data to consider:

- Tuition at public four-year colleges increased 51 percent beyond inflation in the past 10 years and 133 percent over the past 20 years.
- Private four-year colleges realized tuition increases 36 percent beyond inflation over the past 10 years and 102 percent over the past 20 years.
- Public two-year community colleges saw tuition increase 26 percent beyond inflation over the past 10 years and 99 percent over the past 20 years.

These figures should shake policymakers, higher education administrators, and parents, regardless of the reported net-pricing figures. This is because the only message sent to students and parents through these figures is that they must come up with over $11,000 for tuition, fees, and room and board for one year at a public four-year college, or a minimum of $44,000 for a four-year degree. This realization, even if incorrect, will have a negative impact on efforts to motivate and prepare students well before high school graduation, especially those from lower-income families. A historically-based projection 20 years in the future estimates tuition at a four-year institution at $12,000—equivalent to today’s tuition, room, board, and other costs—and that’s in today’s dollars! (See EPIGraph on Page 4). Even if student aid and tax relief covers one third of the cost, as stated by net-cost figures, that’s still $4,000 in current dollars—worsening room, board, and other costs, which typically are higher than tuition and fee charges at public universities.

This year’s announcement will give Members of Congress yet another excuse to pin back the ears of college presidents regarding escalating college prices. However, those same lawmakers will also have to find a way to increase Pell Grants and other need-based funding, which they’ve been unable to do over the past four years. State legislators must get their act together and recommit themselves to higher education funding to reduce the burden on students and families. Colleges and universities, for their part, must restrain themselves and become more fiscally responsible. And, of course, students and their families better get to know their loan officers on a first-name basis.

*Dr. Watson Scott Swail* is the President of the Educational Policy Institute and former co-director of the College Board’s *Trends* reports. Email your comments to wswail@educationalpolicy.org.