



Vol 4. No. 1

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December 2008

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DEADLINES TO NOTE

Davenport Nominations January 24, 2009
Constitution and Bylaws: January 24, 2009
Emerging Leadership Academy February 20, 2009
Request for Labels for NCHE Elections February 27, 2009

DAVENPORT AWARD NOMINATIONS

NCHE presents an award at its Regular Annual Meeting that honors James Davenport (1938–1989), the first president of the National Council for Higher Education. A faculty member at Washtenaw Community College, Michigan, he worked tirelessly for over two decades for higher education members and programs within the NEA and internationally. His dedication to the higher education community and belief that all educators must work together as one family (preK–G) are memorialized in this award. For nominations go to <http://www2.nea.org/he/nche/images/dvnawdan2008.pdf>.

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NOMINATIONS FOR EMERGING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY BEING SOLICITED

The NEA Higher Education Division is seeking nominations for its Emerging Leadership Academy. The program provides an opportunity for NEA higher education members who would like to become more involved in their local and state Davenport Nominations January 15, 2009 Constitution and Bylaws: January 16, 2009 Emerging Leadership Academy February 20, 2009 Request for Labels for NCHE Elections February 27, 2009 associations and to learn about the NEA and how it interfaces with local and state affiliates. Application deadline is February 20, 2009. To find information and nominations forms, go to <http://www2.nea.org/he/>.

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ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND CUBA-BASED STUDY PROGRAMS—U.S. COURT OF APPEALS DECISION

On November 4, 2008, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia issued a decision holding tighter federal restrictions on Cuba-based study programs. The decision is not particularly noteworthy, except for the court's discussion of the muddled state of the law of academic freedom. As Judge Edwards (a liberal) notes in his concurring opinion, the Supreme Court's decisions in this area "leave[s] undecided the many questions relating to the concept and breadth of academic freedom," and in his concurring opinion, Judge Silberman calls the concept of academic freedom "elusive."

This lawsuit challenged the constitutionality of new (2004) regulations imposing greater restrictions on programs involving study in Cuba. In order to be approved by the federal government, programs involving travel to Cuba for the purpose of study must meet three criteria: the study program must last at least ten weeks; participating students must be enrolled at the academic institution sponsoring the program; and any faculty

who teach in such a program must be “full-time permanent employees regularly employed in a teaching capacity at the [sponsoring] institution.”

Without defining the “contours” of the right to academic freedom, the court of appeals held that these restrictions do not implicate in the least the right to academic freedom of higher education faculty (whatever that might be). The court said that the regulations do not restrict the content of what professors might want to teach about Cuba at their own institutions or in Cuba, and that “professors remain free to teach in Cuba so long as they and their institutional employers establish programs in accordance with the regulations,” i.e., meet the three criteria.

According to Michael Simpson, NEA Assistant General Counsel, “This is the second recent court case I have noticed involving professors challenging on First Amendment grounds government restrictions on foreign travel. The Emergency Coalition case involved the asserted right to “academic freedom,” which seems to be of special interest to higher ed faculty. The decision is instructive because the court easily (and correctly) finds no First Amendment violation. It makes interesting reading because two judges ruminate about the confusing state of the law of academic freedom, while failing to provide any greater clarity or guidance.” To read the case, go to: <http://www2.nea.org/he/nche/news/images/cuba.pdf>

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THE ADJUNCTIFICATION OF ENGLISH

Without anyone paying much attention, professors have substantially been replaced by part timers and those off the tenure track when it comes to teaching English and writing to undergraduates. Read more at <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/12/11/english>

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A WIDGET ONTO THE FUTURE

They float around on desktops, populate home pages and bulge out of Facebook profiles. They aren’t exactly tangible, which is why they’re called widgets, but they’re real enough within the digital ether that some educators want to turn them into teaching tool. Read more at <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/12/08/widgets>

BREADTH OF ADJUNCT USE AND ABUSE

The use of adjuncts is well known among academics, but many believe that these instructors are utilized primarily in certain areas (such as the humanities) or certain types of institutions (such as community colleges). But a report recently released by the American Federation of Teachers suggests that the breadth and depth of adjunct use is greater than many realize — such that they are teaching a majority of public college and university courses, and are a major force in a wide range of disciplines.

The report — [“Reversing Course: The Troubled State of Academic Staffing and a Path Forward”](#) — is designed to publicize the extent of adjunct use with a mind toward encouraging more colleges to either improve the pay they offer adjuncts or shift more of their positions to the tenure track. Along those lines, the AFT is releasing a new tool that allows colleges to calculate the costs of changing staffing policies. The goal is to show that modest changes may be possible — even in tight budget years like this one — and that over time, such changes could have a meaningful impact on the makeup of faculties and the compensation of adjuncts. Read full article at <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/12/03/adjunct>

POWER GRAB AT DUPAGE

Periodically, colleges debate such questions as the future of the curriculum, the role of the student newspaper, how outside speakers should be selected, and so forth. At the College of DuPage, a community college outside of Chicago, the board recently proposed major overhauls on all these issues with a common theme — power that currently rests elsewhere would be moved to the trustees. Read more at <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/11/24/dupage>

HIGHER EDUCATION: MEASURING UP 2008

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education recently released "Measuring Up 2008," its biennial national and state-by-state report card on higher education. Performance is evaluated, compared, and graded in six areas: preparation for college, participation, affordability, completion, benefits, and learning. In assessing

progress in these areas, the report card also places the performance of American higher education in a global perspective by incorporating international comparisons wherever possible. For more information, go to <http://measuringup2008.highereducation.org/>. See editorial on presidents' salaries at <http://measuringup2008.highereducation.org/>. See editorial on presidents' salaries at http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2008/12/06/recession_not_for_college_presidents/

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THE ABOR CREEP INTO AUSTRALIA

An Australian Senate committee, looking into whether the country's universities are under the control of left-wing academics, has found that no such bias exists, the newspaper *The Australian* reported. The inquiry was started earlier this year by the Young Liberals, the youth division of Australia's politically conservative Liberal Party, which was then in power. The Labor Party has since taken control of the Senate. The Young Liberals' inquiry encouraged students to "out" left-leaning professors by submitting recordings of lectures and excerpts from textbooks to Senate investigators. The committee received 69 such submissions and concluded that if there were examples of bias, it was because of poor teaching rather than a result of a broad-based left-wing conspiracy. The panel's chairman, a member of the Labor Party, called the inquiry a waste of time. —Martha Ann Overland.

The [National Education Association](#) and the [American Federation of Teachers](#) sent letters concerning this issue.

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THE COSTS OF FAILURE FACTORIES IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

What is the real story about graduation rates in higher education and high schools? The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) for Public Policy Research published an article by Mark Schneider, vice president for new education initiatives at the American Institute, which compares higher school and postsecondary graduation rates and how those rates compare with other countries and if private or public postsecondary institutions can do better. Read this article by going to: http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.28863/pub_detail.asp

THE GATES FOUNDATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

With the election over, attention turned to money and manners in November. Scott Jaschik's story about the Gates Foundation's plans to spend hundreds of millions on college completion, particularly at community colleges, was our most forwarded article last month. Doug Lederman's report on a session about "classroom civility" that took place at the Council of Independent Colleges' Institute for Chief Academic Officers sparked heated comments (apparently "condescending negativism" is in the eye of the beholder). We have fallen to 10th place in the world in post-secondary graduation.

<http://www.insidehighereducation.com/news/2008/11/12/gates>

FROM THE COLLEGE BOARD

The College Board Admissions in the 21st Century: Preserving the Dream of America. Two years ago, the College Board convened the Task Force on Admissions in the 21st Century comprised of a group of leaders of the admissions, financial aid, enrollment management and school counseling communities to address the growing complexity of the admissions process in light of changing demographics. The overarching goal of the task force was to address the broad challenges that face the admissions profession and higher education to create greater educational opportunities for all students. Task Force on Admissions in the 21st Century place in the world in post-secondary graduation <http://click.collegeboard.com:8080/17223896.3983.0.2505>

The task force examined a broad range of issues and looked for ways in which the College Board, in collaboration with its members, could contribute to solutions that would best serve students as they prepare for, apply to and enroll in postsecondary education. In its report, entitled "Preserving the Dream of America: An Open Letter to the Professionals in Admissions, Financial Aid and Counseling," the task force begins by articulating the values that underlie the profession and then proposes a set of actions to support these values and guide the profession into the 21st century. Visit the special micro-site at <http://www.collegeboard.com/admissionsinthe21stcentury>

NCHE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Have you renewed your NCHE membership? In November you should have received

your 2008-2009 NCHE membership renewal invoice. If you have not yet renewed your membership, you can renew at nche@nea.org. You can also renew Individual membership at the NCHE Regular Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon, on March 26 and 27, 2009. Individual and organizational voting credentials are only available to members who have paid their dues. Please return your NCHE membership today. We look forward to your continued support and seeing you in Washington D.C.

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NCHE REGULAR ANNUAL MEETING AND NEA HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Don't forget to register for the NCHE Regular Annual Meeting (March 26 and 27, 2009) and the NEA Higher Education Conference (March 27-29, 2009) in Portland, Oregon. To get the early registration discount, go to <http://www2.nea.org/he/conf.html>

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