

DID YOU KNOW?

A Look at Current Events in Higher Education

Rowan University Institutional Research and Planning

“What’s in your Syllabus?”

The Syllabus Becomes a Repository of Legalese

By PAULA WASLEY, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*

The syllabus for a course on American literature at the University of South Alabama seems pretty routine at first glance. It includes among its required readings, for instance, *The Great Gatsby* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. But near the bottom of Page 3 is something not related to course work — a detailed clause on classroom behavior: "Students are expected to arrive on time, not to leave early, not to wear caps inside the classroom, and to follow traditions of decorum and civility." Course syllabi have long been as varied as the instructors who composed them. Indeed, many faculty members are loath to share them, for fear of intellectual theft. But increasingly the contemporary syllabus is becoming more like a legal document, full of all manner of exhortations, proscriptions, and enunciations of class and institutional policy — often in minute detail that seems more appropriate for a courtroom than a classroom. Take, for example, the injunction that appeared recently on an introductory-religion syllabus at Wartburg College: "Keep your e-mail 'inbox' tidy so that you may receive timely notices from your professor."

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University releases sweeping 10-year plan

By Ken Pitts and Kevin Robillard, University of Maryland *Diamondback Online*

The university yesterday unveiled a draft of its strategic plan for the next decade, proposing bold changes in international education, graduate programs, the CORE curriculum and distribution of resources to departments, along with specific goals for fundraising, recruitment and diversity. The strategic plan, which comes out once a decade, guides the university through the near future, ultimately aiming to make it "world class." Goals, ranging from specific benchmarks to vague long-term hopes, cover virtually every area of the university - from media relations to improving Route 1 to building a new center to help professors with teaching skills. "This plan is a plan for reshaping the university. This plan is a plan for building a university that the citizens of the state of Maryland - and, quite frankly, of the nation - will be proud of for many years to come," Provost Nariman Farvardin said. "If the plan is successfully developed and implemented, it's a transformational plan." Though the plan's scope is broad, it emphasizes four areas: the university's CORE general education program, graduate education, international programs and improving the community surrounding the university.

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Cutting Tuition — and Thriving

By Elia Powers, *Inside Higher Ed*

Is a college that lowers tuition a college on its last legs? In some cases, maybe. But officials at Lourdes College, a small liberal arts institution in Ohio, say the campus is in fine shape after making the unorthodox move four years ago. Enrollment numbers support their case: Lourdes's head count went from 1,249 in fall 2003 to roughly 1,500 the next year, when full-time students saw a 41 percent tuition decrease. That trend has continued. As of last fall, more than 2,000 students were enrolled. [Increasing enrollment](#) is something of a trend among liberal arts colleges. Several institutions have experimented with tuition cuts. But the perception that high price is equivalent to quality often deters leaders from contemplating the latter move, even amid escalating concern about college access and affordability.

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'Chic Geek': Computer Science Major Rebounds

By Scott Jaschik, *Inside Higher Ed*

[New national data](#) show that what has been a traumatic decade for computer science departments is finally starting to turn around. For the first time since 2000, the number of newly declared undergraduate majors at doctoral-granting computer science departments is up. The increase is a small one, and the numbers are still at roughly half of their 2000 levels. But for computer scientists who have been debating when the turnaround would start, the answer appears to be that it has. And anecdotal evidence from non-doctoral departments outside of the new survey suggests that they are seeing similar rebounds. Experts cite a variety of factors: a much improved job market for graduates, shifts in the curriculum that take it far beyond programming, and improved marketing to both prospective students and their parents.

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Math Suggests College Frenzy Will Soon Ease

By ALAN FINDER, *The New York Times*

High school seniors nationwide are anxiously awaiting the verdicts from the colleges of their choice later this month. But though it may not be of much solace to them, in just a few years the admissions frenzy is likely to ease. It's simply a matter of demographics. Projections show that by next year or the year after, the annual number of high school graduates in the United States will peak at about 2.9 million after a 15-year climb. The number is then expected to decline until about 2015. Most universities expect this to translate into fewer applications and less selectivity, with most students probably finding it easier to get into college. "For the high school graduate, this becomes a buyers' market," said Daniel M. Fogel, president of the [University of Vermont](#)

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Colleges Reduce Out-of-State Tuition to Lure Students

By JONATHAN D. GLATER, *The New York Times*

HAYWARD, Calif. — [California State University](#), East Bay, has never had the cachet of nearby Berkeley. But it has a great location overlooking the San Francisco Bay and aspires to raise its profile and grow. So starting this year it is trying something different to lure applicants: participating in a regional program resulting in lower tuition for students from Washington, Oregon, Montana and a dozen other Western states.

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