Kennedy: Higher ed costs ‘shameful’

By Mike Taj
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., said last night that the rising costs of higher education are “shameful” and said it will take more than “lip service” to achieve the equal opportunity grants set by great American leaders.

At the James E. Rogers College of Law-facilitated speech at the Marriott, Kennedy said after four years of troubling trends, education needs to return to as one of the country’s highest priorities.

Past political leaders such as the founding fathers, labor leader Cesar Chavez, and Kennedy’s brother, John F. Kennedy, made important advances for the country in expanding educational opportunities, Kennedy said.

“Our founders understood that this was important,” said Kennedy, the second most senior member of the Senate. “That education is not just an individual right but a way of creating informed and educated citizens.”

But in the past four years, federal support for education has taken a cut, Kennedy told about a hundred law students, faculty, and UA Administrators like Provost George Davis and President Peter Linnick.

“We can’t allow the current situation to continue,” Kennedy said “College federal aid has to keep pace with the rising cost of education.”

Kennedy pointed out that since George Bush took office, Pell Grants for low-income students are costing a smaller portion of students’ tuition and the number of grants students receive is decreasing while the number of loans they have to take out is increasing.

“College should never be a dis-qualifier for a well-qualified student to go to college,” Kennedy said.

In light of the increasingly global economy and the income gap between college graduates and non-college graduates, support for higher education is even more important, Kennedy said.

Kennedy said increasing accessibility requires the federal government to fill any financial gap the families of students, the state, and colleges cannot fill.

“Money is not the answer to everything but if a clear indication of where a country’s priorities are,” Kennedy said, adding that for every dollar the federal government spends, 2.6 cents goes toward education.

Kennedy said he supports practical solutions to the problem of accessibility to higher education. He said tax credits should be expanded, the repayment of student loans should become less burdensome, and support should be provided for the direct lending program, where the American people not corporate lenders provide financial aid for students.

Kennedy also said college-related debt should be forgiven for college graduates who work for the public sector, which appealed to Patrick Staffer, a third year law student who unshod attended the event.

Staffer said debt forgiveness for public employees would encourage more students to fill important public positions.

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Mt. Graham to be officially dedicated Fri.

By Natasha Bhuyan
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

The UA will host the official dedication ceremony Friday for the Large Binocular Telescope on Mount Graham, a project both hailed and criticized by people across the nation.

Although the telescope is not complete, representatives from institutions who have invested in the LBT will tour the Mirror Lab in the Steward Observatory, followed by the dedication at the Westin La Paloma Resort, said Ann Spits, special assistant to the director at Steward Observatory.

When completed, the $120 million telescope will be equipped with two 8.4-meter honeycomb mirrors that will permit high definition observation of faint stars and galaxies by combining light from the mirrors, said Bruno Marano, a professor of astronomy at the University of Bologna in Italy.

Adaptive optics secondary mirrors will provide a built-in capability of correcting atmospheric turbulence, resulting in sharper images, said Marano, who will attend the ceremony Friday.

"LBT will see deeper into space than the Hubble Space Telescope and, for the very first time, see planets revolving around planets in other solar systems," said Jim Slagle, assistant director and program manager of LBT from UA.

But not everyone is leading the LBT and other telescope projects on Mount Graham.

For nearly two decades the telescopes have been the subject of controversy due to their location atop Mount Graham, a site which the local San Carlos and White Mountain Apache Native American tribes consider sacred.

"It’s been long, hard work... a struggle," said Michael Davis, executive director for the Apache-Sitgreaves Coalition and head of the San Carlos Apache tribe. "But we will continue to oppose all the activity on Mount Graham."

Environmental groups across the country have also opposed the telescopes, claiming the mountain has more ecological diversity than any mountain in the United States.

Dwight Metzger, a longtime activist with the Mount Graham Coalition, said in its quest to secure prestige, the UA has used its political power to decimate a holy site by being the first university to challenge Native American religious rights in a court of law.

In 1996, Congress exempted the Mount Graham telescopes from the Endangered Species Act, the Environmental Policy Act and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Metzger said.

"If the UA had properly followed the national environmental law, there wouldn’t have been that many problems," Davis said. "But they don’t follow the law - they run to Congress for exemptions."

See GRAHAM/II

Campus organizations promote early voting

By Natasha Bhuyan
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

With the deadline for voter registration passed and election day approaching, campus organizations are promoting early voting to ensure students’ voices are heard.

Also known as mall bums or election booths, early voting allows students who cannot make it to their polling station on Nov. 2 to cast their ballots by mail.

Yonnee Reed, assistant to the Maricopa County Recorder, said students can obtain an early ballot mailed to them outside of their registration county, they must submit a written request to their registered county for signature verification.

"Do want ballots floating around when they shouldn’t be," Reed said.

Ballots will be mailed to voters within two days. Reed said, and must be postmarked by Nov. 1.

F. Ann Rodriguez, Pima County Recorder, said students do not have to be "abroad" to receive an absentee ballot.

Anyone registered in Pima County can request an absentee ballot by phone, Internet or mail, as long as the ballot will be mailed to a location within Pima County.

Amber Hicks, a biochemist, said.

See ABSENTEED

UA group helps students through grief

By Holly Weis
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

An off-campus support group is reaching out to students who have lost loved ones in an effort to help them cope and to let them know they are not alone.

The support group is for people between the ages of 18 and 29 and meets at Tu Nido on 3922 N. Fort Lowell Road.

Tu Nido is a non-profit group that provides support to children and their families as they deal with serious illness and death.

Though the group works mostly with children, for the past three years they’ve had a support group for adults as well. Members of the support group’s members are UA students.

Program Director Linda Hardy said Tu Nido started the support group about three years ago after receiving calls from several young adults who

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