Students’ Pell Grants shrink

By Natasha Bhagwan
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

A new Pell Grant eligibility formula passed by Congress will save the federal government $30 million per year while shutting out thousands of students who depend on Pell Grants to help pay for college.

Under the new formula, announced in late December by the U.S. Department of Education, about 1.5 million university students across the nation will receive smaller Pell Grants next fall, while 80,000 to 90,000 are expected lose their Pell Grants altogether, according to The Chronicle of Higher Education.

However, since the Arizona tax structure has not changed significantly in the past decade, the impact the new federal formula will have on UA students should be minimal, said John Nametz, director of the Office of Student Financial Aid.

“I don’t think it will have the kind of effect (there) as it will have in New York,” Nametz said. “But it will affect your aid.”

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Governor seeks funding increase

By Andrea Kelly
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

PHOENIX — Gov. Janet Napolitano told the state Legislature Monday that education is her “first priority” and showed her commitment to higher education with a proposal to double state financial aid funding.

In her State of the State address, Napolitano also said she would be asking the Arizona Board of Regents to increase funding for state universities that increase the number of students who graduate “in a reasonable time.”

“Our universities have a responsibility to make sure their students graduate — particularly in the fields of nursing, teaching and engineering,” Napolitano said.

Regent Jack Lewis said the governor’s financial aid proposal was an important element in higher education and supported it strongly.

Napolitano said he thinks Napolitano is pledging state support for financial aid because higher education is not getting what it asks for financially from the state Legislature. Lewis brought up the $1,000 tuition increase in 2002 for state residents, citing the large portion of the increase that contributed directly to financial aid the same year.

“The state contribution is not huge,” Lewis said. Education was the first issue she covered in the speech. Napolitano said it is important that education change with the economy.

“Education is our most vital resource,” the governor said to applause from the audience.

Napolitano spoke to the state about the need for more medical professionals and the universities’ roles in the response to that need.

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Tsunami avoided by 2 UA profs on break

By Zach Cozick
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

Avoid the shock and devastation left over from the tsunami that struck Southeast Asia Dec. 26, concerns raised about the safety of two faculty members in the UA department of planetary sciences, who had not been heard from since the tsunami hit.

Rogelio Varolo, professor of planetary sciences, and his wife, Caitlin Griffin, an associate professor of planetary sciences, were on a cycling vacation in the mountains of northern Thailand when the tsunami occurred.

However, Yello and Griffin’s finally got in touch with family and their UA colleagues this week, unaware of the disaster that surrounded them, said Virginia Smith, a budget analyst for the UA’s Lunar and Planetary Laboratory.

“They didn’t know about the tsunami or the concern about them

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Tortillas thrown at graduation

By Joe Fergen
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

The UA tradition of tortilla throwing returned to McKale Center for winter commencement, climax attempts by UA administrators to end the longstanding ritual.

During the fall semester, UA President Peter Kitts tried to revoke the university-wide commencement ceremony for December, citing concerns about a lack of decorum during the ceremony itself.

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