Discrepancies found in college figures

By Solly Strtfl Bwibot

WASHINGTON — For years, American colleges have railed against magazine rankings of their campuses as oversimplified "short cuts" that gloss over the complex, subtle nature of learning.

Now there are contentions that some of the schools, under pressure to attract students, are fibbing about the figures they send each year for the rankings done by U.S. News & World Report, Money magazine and others.

The rankings have come under closer scrutiny since an April 5 Wall Street Journal article reported discrepancies in data sent for the rankings and information sent to debt-rating agencies.

The dispute over the rankings has underscored the importance of marketing to the nation's 3,000 colleges and universities.

"It's a buyer's market," says Lee Sexton, dean of admissions at the University of Pennsylvania, whose school was not mentioned in the Journal article.

"And the amount of publicity you get helps determine the students you get," a spokesman for New York University — which was mentioned in the Journal article — said questions asked by the surveys can be interpreted in different ways, which results in varying answers.

For example, the Journal reported that NYU, in responding to the U.S. News survey, excluded the SAT scores of about 100 poor students in a special state-sponsored program. But NYU's Virgil Rennulli said Monday the U.S. News survey asked for SAT scores for students entering school in the fall. The 100 excluded students began classes in the summer.

"This has become a fairly big thing. We don't take this as an accurate rating of how good a school it is," Rennulli said.

Among other discrepancies reported by the Journal:

— New College of the University of South Florida, in Sarasota, reported its freshman class average SAT score as 1296. But that score was obtained by cutting off the bottom-scoring six percent of students, raising the average 40 points. Admissions director David Anderson told the

"The committee narrowed the field from 100 to six and then began personal interviews," McLean said. "The committee wanted someone that the students would like. We therefore made each candidate come to the campus (to) meet students, and asked for student's input."

According to McLean, Ribeau was the student's first choice and the candidate best qualified for the position.

Ribeau could not be reached for comment, but his new colleagues praised his appointment.

John Laskey, vice chairman of the Bowling Green board of trustees and a member of the search committee, said Ribeau met all the qualifications the committee set. Laskey added that Ribeau's warmth, easy manner and self-confidence turned because there was no evidence of anti-white bias.

In an interview:

— Agreed to use a lawsuit stemming from the 1983 downing of a Korean airliner over the Persian Gulf to attack federal subsidies for Americans die on international flights.

— Said it will use appeals from two District of Columbia residents to clarify a federal law that adds five years to the prison sentence of anyone who "uses or carries" a gun while engaged in drug-trafficking.

— Turned down the appeal of a Secret Service agent being sued for taking along a CBS camera crew when he searched a Brooklyn, N.Y., home three years ago.

In the Birmingham case, black residents, the federal government and the local NAACP branch praised his appointment.

According to Gardner McLean, a public relations staff member at Ohio's Bowling Green University, Ribeau was chosen from more than 100 applications and nominations.

Ribeau was offered the position after the 16-member search committee — comprised of board of trustees members, faculty and students — completed a series of interviews.

Ribeau was asked to visit the campus, meet with students and make several group presentations before he received the job.

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**TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 1995**

**H E N D II**

**MUSTANG DAILY**

**Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinics Offered**

The San Luis Obispo County Health Department offices are offering low-cost, confidential treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. Services are offered at offices in San Luis Obispo, Atascadero, Grover Beach, Morro Bay and Paso Robles. Cost for treatment is $30.

Information about clinic appointments or questions about STDs can be answered by calling the San Luis Obispo office at 781-5500.

**TODAY**

**Job Search Workshop**

- The workshop will be held in Career Services, Room 224. Sign up in advance. 11 a.m. - noon — 756-2501

**Co-Op and Summer Job Workshop**

- The workshop will be held in Career Services, Room 224. Sign up in advance. 2-3 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY**

**Resume and Cover Letter Workshop**

- The workshop will be held in Career Services, Room 224. Sign up in advance. 1-2 p.m.

**Co-Op and Summer Job Workshop**

- The workshop will be held in Career Services, Room 224. Sign up in advance. 2-3 p.m.

**College of Engineering Council Meeting**

- U.U. 220, 5 p.m.

**Native American Student Organization Meeting**

- Multicultural Center, 5-6 p.m.

**UPCOMING**

**Last day to register for EPT/ELM Exams**

- The exams will be held May 6.

**ONGOING**

**Aid needed for local family**

The San Luis Obispo Firefighters Association is seeking support to aid the Diaz family. The family's home was severely damaged in a fire April 11. If you would like to make a cash donation, contact Mike Ward — 781-7380

**AGENDA**

*Story by Tara Bradley*

Beneath its beautiful scenery, San Luis Obispo harbors a growing homeless population.

*Fox; 756-6784*

"Wild Bill" (top) takes a sip from a bottle at a bench near the San Luis Obispo Mission. Dave "The Tramp" Camp of Tucson, Ariz., counts his money. Both men are homeless. Daily photos by L. Scott Robinson

**W**hether seen in front of Linnaea's, near San Luis Obispo Creek or enjoying a bagel on Broad Street, it's not uncommon to see homeless people sitting on benches and walking the streets of San Luis Obispo.

Just as spring attracts students to San Luis Obispo's sun-filled streets, so does it attract the homeless.

But the homeless in San Luis Obispo are also a part of the community. While they are used to glares, turned cheeks and lectures, they are here to stay.

It's because of this that many in San Luis Obispo have a hard time with local homeless people.

"I do not know why they come here, but I am getting a little tired of seeing the same guys as I've seen last year," said recreation administration sophomore Amy Widdel. "I do not give money out in this town anymore because I know it goes towards alcohol."

The attitude is common among Cal Poly students and the community.

Fowler, nighttime staff member at the Economic Opportunity Commission Homeless Shelter on Orcutt Road and founder of the nonprofit organization Grass Roots, believes job competition contributes to San Luis Obispo's homeless population.

"Jobs and affordable housing are being competed for by college students and professional folks," she said. "There is just not enough to go around."

See AGENDA, page 5
Some administrators say the questions from polling agencies can be misinterpreted

Some of the discrepancies uncovered by the Journal were inadvertent, schools say — the result of handling up to 50 surveys a year.

In most cases, the flawed data also wouldn’t have changed the schools’ rankings, guidingbook publishers insist, because they consider many different factors.

Nevertheless, the publishers say they’re disturbed.

“But there is such fierce competition for students, she notes. “If you drop in those rankings, alumni might call. The president might get angry.”

“Some of these schools have admitted to purposely lying on our survey,” says Robert Morse, director of research for the U.S. News guide. The same colleges "would reject a student who lied on an application.”

When the rankings are published they can have an immediate effect. Schools with good rankings often call news conferences. Alumni at schools that drop in rankings demand to know what went wrong.

“The difference between ranking No. 1 and No. 2 in one of these surveys is simply not a credible difference,” said Barbara-Jan Wilson, dean of admissions and financial aid at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn. “Nevertheless, it’s a wonderful marketing tool for the school ranked No. 1.”
Farmers get money for nothing

By Jason D. Plemons

This has to be the greatest scam pulled in the history of this nation. When a farmer passes me in his brand-new $35,000 car, I can’t help but wonder what is going on.

When a farmer passes me in his brand-new $35,000 car, I can’t help but wonder what is going on.

American farmers could feed the world with their dedication to crop production. I grew up in the San Joaquin Valley where farmers are king; they wield political power that rivals the power of those in Congress.

My grandfather was a farmer and his parents were farmers. I went to school with sons and daughters of farmers, and spent some time tending young grape vines in the sweltering heat of the Valley’s summer.

But what I am going to write will not doubt kick soil at people in the agriculture business.

Farmers are one of the largest recipients of federal subsidies in the country, and what they receive is no less than welfare. When Congress speaks of welfare reform, it should take a long, hard look at the American farmer.

It may be true that the farmers of America produce enough food to feed our country and the entire world. It is also true they often grow too much, and harvest their crops on the backs of poor immigrants from Mexico.

Migrant workers are not only subjected to low wages and poor housing conditions, but are poisoned daily by the oversupply of chemical pesticides.

Some will attempt to refute this accusation by saying farmers are one of the largest recipients of federal subsidies in the country, and what they receive is no less than welfare.

As I have already pointed out above, there are a number of reasons why the farmers do receive a large amount of federal money.

The theory must be that, since the farmers over-produce crops, the price of these crops would be too low to allow the farmer to make a living. So the government steps in and tells them they will be paid if they don’t grow a specific crop that season.

That’s a great gimmick. I’m sure there are some manufacturing firms out there that would lose this kind of treatment. I, for one, would welcome it. Surely there are enough writers out there producing material, and journalists are an abundance. Maybe I can get the government to give me a subsidy to not write anything.

The last I heard, farmers use the majority of the water in California. Do they pay for it like you and I do? No way. Any mention of such a thing guarantees an abrupt closure. Not much later, I suppose I would find myself in the backseat. Hey, at least the lettuce and broccoli will be cheaper than if I tried to buy it in the store right now.

But that’s another topic — the agriculture middlemen.

Jason D. Plemons is a journalism senior and Daily staff writer.

Letters Policy

Mustang Daily welcomes letters and commentaries from students, staff, and other community members. Letters should be typed, double spaced and under 250 words. Commentaries should be typed, double spaced, and about 750 words.

All authors must include a name, signature and phone number. Students should include their major and class standing. Mustang Daily reserves the right to edit letters for clarity, grammar, and length.

Submissions can be brought, mailed, faxed or e-mailed to Mustang Daily.

Mustang Daily

Graphic Arts Bldg #226, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

FAX (805) 756-6784

E-mail: [email protected]
AGENDA: San Luis Obispo homeless aren't a homogenous group

From page 2
According to Fowler, the drug problem is so pronounced that there are five lines drawn between drug usage and mental illness. Fowler said, "Many times drug and alcohol abuse stem from highly dysfunctional families that eventually turn the abuses away after he or she has stomped all over the family."

She estimated the number of mentally unstable homeless is currently at 35 percent, adding that "the closure of mental institutions has had everything to do with this."

However, according to Beverly Dawson, a volunteer at the shelter, the public tends to look at the homeless as a homogeneous group. "They are the people you walk by every day and never realize that they are homeless," she said. "The (homeless) population is increasing and will continue to grow as long as we, as a state, do not have the viable income we need."

But, Dawson says, this is only part of the problem. "We have a large incidence of people here from abusive homes, folks with learning disabilities that were never tested and various other problems," she said.

The purpose of the shelter is to try and get people back on their feet, Dawson said. "I don't want them to lose their job, I don't want them to lose their family. I want them to hang in there and try and get people back on their feet."

Dawson noted that those staying at the shelter have the viable income they need. "We have the viable income we need."

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The Citibank MBA Loan Program offers Federal Stafford Loans and our exclusive MBAAssist Loan.

We find the burden of government is very high," said J.D. Foster, executive director of the foundation. The calculations assume all personal and business taxes are divided equally among individuals.

Ninety-one years ago, when Holmes wrote his pithy appreciation of tax, Tax Freedom Day came to the end of January.
It's One Of The Most Useful Credit Cards On The Planet. Unless You've Stolen It. Your MasterCard® is stolen. You panic, get angry, panic some more. Then you call and cancel it. Now the thief is in possession of, oh, about seven cents worth of stolen plastic. (Maybe he can use it as a coaster when he entertains at the hideout.) So relax. You only have to pay for stuff you bought, and you can get a new card the next day. It'll be accepted at millions of places, one of which must sell wallets. MasterCard. It's more than a credit card. It's smart money.
Gov. Wilson goes back to 'normal day' after minor, second-throat surgery

Audience farm

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Pete Wilson returned to work Monday, three days after surgery to remove a benign nodule from his right vocal cord, and had a normal day of meetings and office work, Wilson aides said.

"He was talking, having meetings all day. It was a normal day," Wilson aide said.

There were no public appearances Monday by Wilson, who is in the early stages of organizing a campaign for the Republican nomination for president.

SUPREME COURT: Black firefighters in case rallied for equal hiring

From page 1 sued the city during the mid-1970s, alleging racial discrimination in hiring and promoting firefighters. Less than 2 percent of the city's firefighters were black in 1976, and no black had ever served as a firelieutenant.

In 1981, the city agreed to begin an affirmative action plan aimed at raising black employment in the fire department to 2 percent.

The plan set a temporary goal of promoting 50 percent of all firelieutenant openings by the end of the first year of the plan to 2 percent of the city's firefighters but was challenged in the lower courts.

After an initial round of litigation, the Supreme Court ruled in 1989 that the white firefighters could challenge the affirmative action plan.

That year, the fire department ended the 50 percent annual goal for firelieutenant promotions because it had met the 28 percent overall goal. But the white firefighters' lawsuit continued because they were seeking back pay.

A federal judge ruled against the white firefighters and, in the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in 1990, finding that the rule was justified.

The appeals court ruled that the white firefighters failed to prove that blacks made up a much smaller percentage of the firefighters eligible for promotion.

The promotion goal violated the constitutional guarantee of equal protection and a federal civil rights law, the appeals court ruled.

In the appeals court, blacks said the 50 percent promotion goal was arbitrary. Wilson has complained of for years, such as hoarseness and difficulty clearing his throat.