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Undergrads May Teach FWS to Reduce Cost

Budget shortfall prompts program's reevaluation

By YI-KE PENG
Sun Contributor



CORNELL AT A
CROSSROADS

In a few years, first-year and transfer students entering Cornell might be sitting in a First-Year Writing Seminar taught by a fellow undergraduate.

In order to counter the effects of the recession, the John S. Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines is forced to consider changes to its FWS Program. Prof.

Paul Sawyer, English, who also directs the Knight Institute, said that he does not want to loosen the writing requirement, but it is "a real possibility" that the Institute will begin hiring undergraduates as paid

es in departments across the University, over one-third of which are taught by faculty, while the remaining are taught by graduate student teaching assistants, according to its website.

The Institute will face downsizing over the next few years as more faculty members retire and the number of graduate students decreases, according to Sawyer. At the same time, however, the undergraduate population is expected to rise. The problem, then, will be how to teach more students with fewer resources.

Hiring Undergraduates as Instructors

Sawyer pointed out that undergraduates in schools such as the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences are already

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"Small, writing-intensive classes will be more important than ever as average class size grows."

Prof. Paul Sawyer

instructors.

Currently, the majority of Cornell students are required to take two semesters of FWS's. The Institute offers over 100 courses

C.U. Investment Performance Rises By 6.2 Percent In Last Two Months

After a 26 percent decline in its endowment last fiscal year, Cornell has a lot of lost ground to recover. In the first two months of the current fiscal year, the University has been making substantial strides to even out its balance sheet, announcing a 6.2 percent rise in its overall investment performance.

Since reporting a 27 percent loss during the second half of 2008, the endowment rose 2 percent from January through June.

The endowment makes up \$4 billion in the University's \$5.1 billion total investment at the end of the last fiscal year, which ended June 30. While the improvement in investment performance has brought more assets to the University, Cornell has taken substantial funds from the endowment in order to pay for operational costs.

Despite this recent increase in the value of Cornell's investment portfolio, administrators are still concerned about the health of the University's endowment.

Joanne DeStefano, vice president for finance and CFO of the University, explained last week that even though the endowment is regaining its strength, the budget cuts being made by University administrators and faculty across the campus will remain in place.

"As the endowment recovers, it's unlikely that the budget cuts will be reversed," DeStefano said. "It's more likely that any additional funds will be used to invest in strategic core academic programs."

While the University has decided to cut back on their spending from the endowment by 15 percent for the current fiscal year, the University remains committed to providing students with financial aid, as shown by its decision to take out \$35 million from the endowment to fund its new aid initiative.

Cornell's operating budget for the current fiscal year is \$2.9 billion, with 9 to 10 percent of the budget coming from the endowment payout.

— Sam Cross

As H1N1 Spreads, Colleges Across the Nation Prepare

By DAWN LIM
Sun Staff Writer



SWINE FLU AT
CORNELL

Since the Centers for Disease Control called for colleges to take on a flexible, tailored approach to dealing with H1N1 outbreaks, schools have been implementing varied responses to find the proper balance between taking precautions against the spread of the virus and minimizing disruptions to university life.

According to a survey from the American College Health Association, Washington had the nation's highest rate of H1N1 during the peak period in the state: 366.8 cases of the flu for every 10,000 students. New York State had 6.5 cases of the flu for every 10,000 students at its peak.

Considering the varying degrees of magnitude at which campuses have been affected by the flu, and the diversity of campuses across the US, "Institutions of higher learning should tailor the guidance to account for the size, diversity and mobility of their students, faculty and staff," said the CDC, when it released guidelines on how universities should to deal with influenza outbreaks during the 2009-2010 academic year.

At Washington State University — which has seen over 2,500 suspected cases of the flu since the start of the semester — classes are in full swing for the 18,000 students on its Pullman campus.

WSU spokesperson James Tinney said, "Each university is just figuring out how to deal with the situation. We have a plan, but we need to respond to the situation as it changes."

Cornell, which reported 623

National limelight



MATT HINTSA / SUN PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Tanya Babich of ABC 9 WSYR reports from in front of Gannett Health Services on Thursday.

cases of probable H1N1 flu and one death from H1N1 flu complications last week, is similarly maintaining daily operations while continuing to monitor the situation.

In a statement released on Wednesday, President David Skorton reiterated that unless the level of absenteeism on campus became so high that instruction and normal operations were significantly impaired, business would be as usual.

"There currently are no plans to suspend normal instruction for any period of time," he stated.

The Cornell administration has chosen not to issue mandates from the top-down, but called instead for its teaching faculty to exercise discretion in making accommodations for sick students. In his letter to teaching faculty dated on Aug. 25, Dean Kent Fuchs encour-

aged the professors to "develop robust systems to communicate with ill students about their individual situations and also about the status of the course."

"Given the very diverse modes of instruction across

"There currently are no plans to suspend normal instruction for any period of time."

David Skorton

campus, there is no intent on the part of the University to mandate any specific academic measures or accommodations," President Skorton said.

Other schools, however, are putting out more concrete guidelines to teaching staff.

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Got soap?



BETH SPERGEL / SUN SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

Tiffany Chan '11 of C.U. Emergency Medical Service distributes soap on Ho Plaza on Friday to help stop the spread of H1N1.

NEWS: Name that Tree?

Two graduate students conducted a campus-wide inventory of all trees at Cornell.

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OPINION: Blood-Sucking Beast!

Cristina Stiller '10 dares Cornell to assign books from the *Twilight* saga for the Freshmen Reading Project.

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ARTS: Go, Johnny, Go

The Mountain Goat's frontman rocked Ithaca College on Friday night.

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WEATHER:



HIGH: 76°
LOW: 59°