

Published August 15th, 2012

*Lafayette's College Advisor***We Are Losing Our Minds: A Mass Exodus of California Students***Elizabeth LaScala*

Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D. is a Lafayette college advisor. Dr. LaScala draws on 22 years of higher education experience to help guide and support the college admissions process for students and their families. Dr. LaScala is a member of NACAC, WACAC and HECA. She can be contacted at (925) 891-4491 or elizabeth@doingcollege.com. Visit www.doingcollege.com for more information about her services.

Californians. Another recruiter from Dallas-based Southern Methodist University tells students there are options 'beyond the golden fence.' Frankly, these schools have nothing to lose and everything to gain. By enrolling Californians, not only do they get non-resident tuition, they benefit from increased diversity on their campuses too. In turn, this attracts even more Californians at the next admissions cycle, enticed by the fact that colleges can point to a student body with increasing numbers who represent the "Golden State."

Tit for Tat

In much the same way, out-of-state students, who pay three times the tuition as in-state applicants, are becoming much more attractive to UC admissions departments. This year more than 23 percent of all incoming freshmen will be out-of-state and international students. That figure is a big jump from last fall, when 18 percent of all UC admissions were from out-of-state. And it's nearly double the percentage of foreign and non-California residents who were admitted in 2009. Our California students are openly wondering if the University of California's public system with its nine UC campuses and 23 CSU campuses really wants them. With a 3.9 GPA and solid test scores, Joe Williams was recently denied admission at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. He is attending a university in Arizona that "really wants me and is paying me to come." Our public system's push to attract more non-residents is fueling resentment among California students and families who have strived for years to gain admission to one of the country's top public university systems. "It seems like a breach of the state's promise to its residents," his parents said.

If, as most experts believe, access to high quality higher education and an educated workforce are linked to vibrant economic growth, then California is surely headed in the wrong direction. And we are losing our best minds to other colleges across the nation that can provide that education to our youth.

Once upon a time, California public schools ranked nationally as among the best. In the 1960s the state was able to offer each student that qualified a seat in a University of California freshman class. Many graduated within four years with a high quality education, and no debt. Now the state pays only 11 percent of UC tuition costs, and in-state student tuition has tripled over the last 20 years. Average tuition is approximately \$13,000, and that does not include room and board, travel, books and supplies. Total cost of attendance at a UC campus hovers around \$32,000. Our broken public system has weathered drastic budget cuts-\$1.6 billion in 10 years; these cuts have led to tuition hikes, enrollment caps, increasingly competitive admissions, cut courses, fewer teaching assistants and assignments (because there are fewer TAs to help professors grade them). Few can dispute an overall demise in quality of education.

California students, fed up with tuition increases and frustrated by packed California universities, are making a mass exodus. And out-of-state colleges are reaping the rewards. For example, enrollment at Boise State (Idaho) rose tenfold in the past decade and Arizona State doubled its enrollment of freshman from California. University of Oregon has quadrupled its admissions with freshman numbers growing from 280 in 2000 to more than 1,000 in 2010. The Vice Provost at the University of Oregon is thrilled by the "remarkable growth, predominantly out of Northern California." Roger Thompson, vice provost of enrollment management, calls it a "boon for the school."

Universities nationwide regularly employ not so subtle recruitment strategies to woo California high schoolers away from our broken public system. A Maryland recruiter at a recent high school college fair told students to come to his college, where they will graduate in four years, and many schools unabashedly offer thousands of dollars to attract our brightest students. Maryville University, a private school in St. Louis, touts an automatic \$5,000 scholarship to

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA