

For the red, white and blue

Increased patriotism has caused rise in military school applications

America's youth is the future of this country. In the events following Sept. 11, this statement rings true. Military application submissions are rising, proving that American patriotism is the highest it has been since World War II. Now that America is in a war against terrorism, young men and women want to serve their country with pride.



JAMIE DUFF

More young adults are discovering the opportunities offered by the U.S. Armed Forces and are applying by the thousands to all five U.S. Military Academies. One would think 9/11 would have frightened high school seniors into recognizing the dangers of serving in the military but instead confirmed their desire to serve.

Washingtonpost.com cited that the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs received about 10 percent more applicants this year than they received last year. The Naval Academy has also received its largest number of applications since 1990.

Since 9/11, the U.S. economy has suffered. College graduates are worried about finding jobs, and many are extending their education to graduate school to keep out of the rigorous job market. An education from a military academy is one of the best this country can offer. After serving the military, each officer will be at the top of job lists. While the rest of us spend 10 years paying for college and searching the market for jobs after graduation, these cadets are getting an excellent education paid for by the government, as well as a monthly stipend throughout school and, upon graduation, are placed in officer's jobs with good pay and excellent medical benefits.

It is not easy to get into a military academy. Early planning and competitive grades are essential. Military schools normally take one in seven applicants with an average SAT score above 1200. Some would say these young adults are the cream of the crop. Incoming classes usually have a large number of varsity athletes, former class presidents and National Honor Society students. Admission requirements include a senatorial or congressional nomination, as well as a doctor's approval following a rigorous physical examination.

This focused generation of young adults is becoming an example for all future generations to follow. The effects of 9/11 have been a wake-up call, causing everyone to view the world in a different way. Our freedom has been threatened and, if this country needs defense, these men and women want to lead the way.

The military actions of this country were not looked upon highly during our parents' generation when the debate over Vietnam was at its height. Contrary to today, it was not as acceptable or fashionable to be in the military. Now that we have come together as a nation, it is up to these young men and women to show all generations what patriotism really means.

Despite the monetary reasons already mentioned, only one thing could cause an 18-year-old high school graduate to choose a rigorous four years of uniforms, curfews and 30-second showers over four years of beer and drinking parties. That is patriotism.

These future leaders may have to lay their lives on the line to protect this nation. They are obliged to help and are willing to place themselves in the best position — both mentally and physically — to do so. Americans need to tip our hats to these young, brave future military officers who will dedicate years of their lives to hard work, education and service.

Jamie Duff is a senior English major.



FRANK CHANCE • THE BATTALION

Adjust for inflation

Financial aid needs to match rising tuition

In our increasingly competitive economy, a college degree has become a necessity. In light of recent tuition hikes, however, obtaining a degree is becoming more difficult for many low and middle income students, and government leaders are not doing enough to assist them with the cost.



JENELLE WILSON

Four years ago, 9.3 million people were attending college; it is estimated that by next year, the number will increase to 15.8 million.

According to the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Aid, the high school completion rates for low and middle income students have increased by 20 percent over the past 10 years. A growing number of students are academically prepared for college, but the college completion rate for low income students is extremely low. Many simply cannot afford to continue once they are enrolled.

Tuition has been growing at twice the rate of inflation. For a four-year public university, tuition has increased \$2,000 in the past 20 years, and large state deficits are leading to even higher prices.

So far this year, states have cut \$1.5 billion from higher education funding and are expected to cut \$4 billion next year. Some universities are being forced to raise tuition by a considerable amount. The University of Kansas, for example, may double its tuition over the next five years.

Tuition keeps rising, but financial aid is not keeping up.

Pell Grants were created in 1972 by the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant program as a way to make higher education available to all students. In 1975, Pell Grants covered up to 84 percent of college expenses at public, four-year universities, including tuition and on-campus room and board; today they only cover 39 percent. Even the proposal to increase the maximum grant to \$4,000, which is not enough to offset inflation, leaves half of a low-income student's needs unmet.

Last year, 9.3 million students applied for a Pell Grant, but only four million were awarded. A \$1.3 billion budget shortfall threatens to further limit the number of Pell Grants available. If the budget shortfall is not met by Congress, the

maximum grant will only be \$3,900, and they will reach 400,000 fewer students in need of assistance.

Recently, Mitch Daniels, the director of the national Office of Management and Budget, suggested a way to make up for the Pell Grant budget shortfall. His proposal called for the termination of a government program that allowed college students to consolidate their loans under a low, fixed interest rate. Instead, the loan would be subject to interest rates that fluctuate with the economy as they are being repaid.

This change would have raised the \$1.3 billion needed for Pell Grant funding, but it would have done so at the expense of middle income students, who are also struggling to pay for college.

If the interest rate change took effect, according to the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group, a \$17,000 loan would result in an additional \$6,400 in interest rate charges over 20 years.

For many students, college would not be possible without loans and it would be cruel to burden them with making up for the budget shortfall. Thankfully for now, this proposal has been dropped and student interest rates have lowered considerably.

Education is the best way to ensure continued economic success. According to the Census Bureau, the average college graduate makes over \$20,000 more a year than someone with only a high school diploma. The demand for skilled college graduates will only increase. Jobs requiring a post secondary degree are expected to account for 42 percent of the employment growth over the next 10 years.

With almost 16 million students enrolling in college, government officials must do more to provide equal opportunity access to higher education. Loans and Pell Grants need to be adjusted for inflation and tuition increases to help students get the best education possible.

Jenelle Wilson is a junior political science major.

MAIL CALL

Women's Center provides inclusion and equal access

In response to Brandon Posvar's June 6 mail call:

Before people put too much credence in Brandon Posvar's letter, they might pause to realize that the petition he mentions criticizing the Women's Center deliberately misrepresents the center.

Posvar quotes the Women's Center's mission statement that the center "serves as a symbol for the University's commitment to inclusion and equal access." The Women's Center currently offers materials from the Hope Pregnancy Center, a Christian organization encouraging abortion alternatives such as adoption.

Posvar's petition and letter mention none of this, and thus he deliberately misrepresented the Women's Center to try to stir public opinion against it.

Dr. Larson Powell

Women leaders have been successful in other countries

In response to Cayla Carr's June 11 column:

Golda Meir ruled Israel in its vulnerable beginnings. Indira Ghandi was prime minister of India for 12 years and set the world's largest democracy on a course to become a high tech powerhouse. Mrs. Thatcher, the Iron Lady, shook Britain out of its long decline and terrorized European leaders with her handbag. I pity any future foreign leader who would patronize President Condoleezza Rice. If you are looking for candidates in 2032, either of my daughters would do an excellent job.

Michael Murray

If Ms. Carr believes that we are not ready for a female U.S. President because she would likely face criticism from foreign leaders, then by her own logic, perhaps Mr. Bush should not be our president. The rest of the world does not think very highly of him.

Wherever he visits, he is not respected and people don't think he is very intelligent. Whether or not they are right is a different matter; however, based on her argument, he should not be the leader of the United States.

Renee Butler
Class of 2000

Cross burning issue is not about self expression

In response to Joseph Pleasant's June 11 mail call:

In Pleasant's mail call letter, he asserts that Alsobrook trivializes the issue in referring to the cross as two sticks of wood nailed together. Alsobrook should know that a cross does not represent just two pieces of wood to most people. Even most non-Christians know what the cross means to Christians, and if two sticks of wood nailed together were being burned for whatever reason, I don't think it would be a coincidence that they were in the form of a cross. Historically, burning a cross on someone's property is meant to intimidate, to instill fear and a threat of violence to one's person, whether such violence occurs or not.

In Pleasant's letter, he seems to express anger with Alsobrook's words. In his opening sentence he states that Alsobrook is "endorsing cross burning." Alsobrook states that it "pains" him to see a cross on fire and that he "detests" such acts. Surely this is no endorsement thereof.

What Pleasant does point out though, is that cross burning is a hate crime, not a demonstration. Hate crimes are one of the most serious offenses in our nation today. If someone is going to burn a cross, it's usually not in demonstration for or against something, as burning the flag usually is. It is meant to intimidate someone, whether they be minority or not. It is meant to scare. It's express purpose is to make someone feel threatened and frightened; to feel hated.

Greg Manuel
Class of 2004

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