Colleges offer deals to combat tuition hikes

BY SUSAN SNYDER
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUERER

PHILADELPHIA (MCT) — Tony Hall tells his five daughters they must go on to college and get their degrees, but he doesn’t have one himself.

“It’s kind of like a hypocrite. I say a degree is important, but they don’t see mine hanging there,” said the 35-year-old insurance agent from Wyncote.

In July, Hall set out to change that by enrolling at Strayer University, a for-profit institution that offers a primarily business curriculum and caters to working adults. His decision was largely influenced by a new offer at Strayer: tuition breaks.

For every three courses he completes, he will get one tuition-free. No minimum grade-point average is required, just completion. That benefit, however, can be cashed in only during his last year at Strayer.

Strayer’s approach is one way colleges are trying to mitigate the rising cost of tuition as pressure mounts from students facing a crushing debt load. Last Thursday, President Barack Obama said he planned to create a college rating system and policies that award federal financial aid based on factors such as tuition, graduation rates, and student debt.

Karl McDonnell, chief executive officer of Strayer Education, in Herndon, Va., says the program will not only address rising tuition costs but will boost graduation rates.

Students who start as freshmen could earn their entire senior year tuition-free, saving nearly $18,000 — but only if they finish their education. Only 2 percent of Strayer’s students, however, come in as freshmen.

Though the university may lose money from students who earn free tuition, it will do better in the long term if larger numbers stay in school and finish, McDonnell said.

“We consider that a favorable trade-off,” he said.

About 35 percent of undergraduates who come in as freshmen complete their studies in six years, the university said. Of those who come in with the equivalent of an associate degree, 69 percent complete in six years.

Around the country, colleges are trying different approaches to cut tuition costs.

Cabrini College, a Catholic school in Radnor, cut its tuition by 12.5 percent to $29,000 for the 2012-13 school year. It then froze tuition for 2013-14, as well as room and board rates.

Rowan University, a state school in Glassboro, also froze tuition this year. Peirce College in Philadelphia will give a 10 percent discount on summer tuition to students who attend the previous fall and spring semesters.

Some colleges have created online degree programs and accelerated degrees so students can graduate earlier and avoid more debt. States, including Florida, Texas, Wisconsin and California, have seen a push for a $10,000 four-year degree.

Nationally, for-profit universities have been more likely than their nonprofit counterparts to offer rate cuts, said Richard Vedder, a professor of economics at Ohio University who heads the Center for College Affordability and Productivity.

He called Strayer’s initiative “an intriguing idea.”
Tony Hall, a student at Strayer University, poses for portrait at the Center City campus in Philadelphia.
Chamber awards students scholarships

The Greater Northeast Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce Foundation granted college scholarships to eight local students. The recipients included two recent high school graduates, Shannon McHugh (Philadelphia Academy Charter School, West Chester University) and Trevor J. Stacey (Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush, Eastern University).

Awards also went to the following six current college students: Krista Zerkow (Holy Family University), Christine Kirlin (Widener University School of Law), Nicholas Pables (King's College), Joseph McHugh III (Temple University Fox School of Business), Kerri Kirlin (Peirce College) and Rivka L. Horwitz (Pace University's physician assistant program).

The awards dinner took place on June 20 at Brookside Manor at Somerton Springs, in Feasterville. Each student received a scholarship worth $1,100.

The foundation raised money at a “Hail to the Chefs” culinary event, a WomenForward luncheon and a WomenForward conference.

The contest is open to Northeast residents who attend college. Candidates were judged by their grades, an essay and two letters of recommendation.

The foundation has provided 53 scholarships since the program was established in 2007.

Rose McMenamin, vice president of retail business development at 3rd Fed Bank, chairs the foundation. Other leaders are vice chairman Robert Wombwell, treasurer Joseph Healey and secretary Mary Ann Benner. Board members are Mike Logan, Sally Danciu, Nancy Morozin, Jeffrey Miller and Al Taubenberger.

For information about how to apply for next year's scholarships, visit www.gnpeccfoundation.org.

— Tom Waring

A moment of glee: The Greater Northeast Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Foundation held its annual awards dinner on June 20. Eight local students were awarded scholarships during the event. Pictured are (left to right) Trevor Stacey, Rivka Horwitz, Shannon McHugh, Kerri Kirlin, Christine Kirlin, Nicholas Pables and Krista Zerkow (kneeling), the Muller Scholarship recipient. Not pictured is Joseph McHugh, who was in class at Temple University.
Robert N. Bakley, 79, accountant

By Walter F. Naedele
INQUISER STAFF WRITER

Robert N. Bakley, 79, a former foreign service officer who grew up in Camden County, died Sunday, Aug. 11, at his home in Greenville, N.C., after suffering a heart attack.

Born in Camden, Mr. Bakley attended Merchantville High School with the Class of 1952, where he was a student council member and a member of the varsity basketball and football teams.

He served as an Army cook from 1953 to 1955 and worked as a night switchman on the Pennsylvania Railroad until 1960, when he graduated from Peirce Junior College.

“I used to take dinner to him, because he worked nights” in switching towers in Camden County, his wife, Ruth, said.

He passed a certified public accountant exam, scored first in a national exam by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, and worked in the Philadelphia office of the national accounting firm Main Laflenz & Co., his son Daniel said.

In 1965, Mr. Bakley began his accounting career with the U.S. Agency for International Development, which continued, with interruptions, into the early 1990s.

He was with USAID in India from 1965 to 1972 and left to work with the Private Investment Co. of Asia in Singapore from 1972 to 1974.

After a stateside tour with USAID, he worked for the agency in Egypt from 1976 to 1979, his son said.

USAID lent him to the Asian Development Bank in Manila from 1979 to 1988. He then returned to work for the agency in Afghanistan until his retirement from government work.

In the early 1990s, he was briefly the president of Dabol Power in India, a joint venture involving General Electric Co. and Enron Corp., his son said.

“He was an avid Eagles and Phillies fan” no matter how far afield his work took him, his son said, and he tried to keep up to date through stories in the military newspaper Stars and Stripes.

“We used to have good wagers with him,” his son said, because his sons were Washington Redskins fans.

Besides his wife and son Daniel, Mr. Bakley is survived by sons Robert Jr. and William; five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. A daughter, Linda, died earlier.

A memorial service was set for 4 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 25, at the Wilkerson Funeral Home in Greenville.

Condolences may be offered to the family at www.wilkersonfuneralhome.com.

Contact Walter F. Naedele at 610-313-8134, wnaedele@phillynews.com, or follow on Twitter @WNaedele.
Peirce College launches medical coding certificate program

Peirce College has launched a new medical coding certificate program. Graduates will be prepared to review patient medical records and assign numeric codes for diagnosis and procedures, ensuring providers will be reimbursed for healthcare services rendered.

The program was established to help current and prospective medical professionals prepare for careers as medical coders in hospitals, physical and behavioral health rehabilitation centers, doctors’ offices, and insurance companies, thereby meeting the growing demands in the health care industry.
Graham, Sun Devils' confidence riding high

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — Todd Graham arrived at Arizona State last year and turned the program upside down, changing everything from the styles of offense and defense to the look of the football offices and what the players could wear.

It worked. The Sun Devils won eight games and finished with a flourish, beating rival Arizona before closing out with a record-breaking bowl victory.

Heading into his second season in the desert, Graham has changed something else about the program: The momentum.

"I feel like there's as big of a buzz as there's been in a while," Sun Devils offensive lineman Jamil Douglas said. "People are excited to see what we've been working on this offseason."

The Sun Devils needed a lift after five years of mediocrity under previous coach Dennis Erickson.

A winner nearly everywhere he had been, Graham overhauled Arizona State's program, adding a level of discipline that had been missing under Erickson while drumming up interest for the team and assuaging concerns that he would bolt if a better job opened up.

The Sun Devils embraced Graham's approach, finishing off an 8-5 season — one win short of playing in the Pac-12 championship game — with a comeback victory over Arizona to close out the regular season and a 62-28 win over Navy in the Kraft Fight Hunger Bowl, their first bowl victory since the 2005 Insight Bowl.

With a solid core of returning players, led by quarterback Taylor Kelly and defensive tackle Will Sutton, a quality group of newcomers and plenty of confidence, the Sun Devils have their sites set even higher this season.

"I can remember growing up watching the Rose Bowl on an old black-and-white TV," Graham said. "I'm excited. This is the closest I've ever been to something like this and that's why I made the moves that I made because I wanted to have an opportunity to be in this situation."

They're certainly on solid ground.

Arizona State got a big boost during the offseason when Sutton, the Sun Devils' first consensus All-American since Terrell Suggs in 2002, decided to return for his senior season. He was the Pac-12's defensive player of the year last season despite missing nearly two full games due to injury and has added bulk to his 6-foot-1 frame, up to 305 pounds this season.

With rushing linebacker Carl Bradford back, Arizona State will have one of the toughest-to-stop defensive tandems in the Pac-12.

Kelly earned the starter's job last season after a tight preseason race with two others and proved to be a dynamic leader, setting a school record with a completion percentage of 67.1 percent while throwing for over 3,000 yards and 29 touchdowns.

He'll be surrounded by athletic playmakers, including running backs Marion Grice and D.J. Foster, tight end Chris Coyle and Jaelen Strong, who was one of the nation's most productive junior college receivers at Pierce College.

And, after a season of playing in Graham's attack-all-the-time system and seeing how successful it can be, the Sun Devils will be much more comfortable and confident heading into this season.

"Something the coaches were focusing on in spring ball and all through this summer training program is building off where we ended last year," Coyle said. "We had a positive end to the season and we want to take that and have a better season than that."

The key to doing that will be Arizona State's opening gauntlet of a schedule.

After their season opener against Sacramento State on Sept. 5, the Sun Devils face Wisconsin and Stanford on the road, Southern California at home, and Notre Dame, last season's national runner-up, at Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas, on Oct. 5.

It's a daunting stretch, one that will likely define the Sun Devils' season, but a challenge they're looking forward to.

"It's a great schedule, to be honest," Douglas said. "If we can win those games, no telling where we could be ranked in the country, so more than anything, we're excited. We don't look at as a negative thing. We're excited about the challenge."

And a chance to keep the momentum going.
Todd Graham is entering his second season as the head football coach at Arizona State University.
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