

dren not yet in college to reduce its annual savings by about half.

The colleges and universities have justified the ban on “merit” scholarships on equity grounds. If they awarded merit-based assistance, they claim, they would have to cut aid to needy students. But Grossman points out that the richest Ivy League schools—Harvard, Yale, and Princeton—devote a smaller proportion of their gross revenues to financial aid than many of the poorer ones do. Moreover, Grossman says, there’s a lot of fat in higher education—in the form of lavish pay for light teaching loads, substantial support for research projects and graduate students, and time for professors to earn extra income as consultants.

When the U.S. Department of Justice brought an antitrust action in 1991, the Ivies quickly agreed to terminate Overlap; MIT agreed to a separate settlement later. The colleges continued to claim that they were offering aid based only on need. But

Grossman says that they seemed to start competing for talented students by stretching their definition of “need” and adjusting their aid offers according to “merit.” Over time, he believes, this competition probably would have intensified, to the point where a substantial amount of assistance was being awarded on the basis of merit, more students were getting aid, and the aid packages were larger. Unfortunately, Grossman concludes, this now seems unlikely.

Congress, “in the face of intense lobbying by the educational establishment,” enacted legislation in October 1994 that explicitly allows colleges to agree to give only need-based aid, to adopt a common definition of “need,” and to exchange any information about the income and assets of prospective students and their families necessary to make their agreement work. In short, he says, all private colleges in the United States now have carte blanche “to collude to limit financial aid in any way they choose.”

Why Women’s Colleges Work

“Women-Only Colleges” by Mikyong Kim and Rodolfo Alvarez, in *The Journal of Higher Education* (Nov.–Dec. 1995), Ohio State University Press, 1070 Carmack Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43210.

The rise of the modern feminist movement in the 1960s almost rang the death knell for the traditional women’s college. Rejected as separate but patently unequal by feminists of the 1960s and ’70s, these schools saw their number shrink from 300 in 1960 to 84 (including 71 four-year institutions) today. Now, much research suggests that young women get certain benefits from female-only colleges that they don’t get at coed institutions, report Kim and Alvarez, a doctoral candidate and sociology professor, respectively, at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Examining data from surveys in the fall of 1987 and the summer of 1991 of 387 students from 34 women’s colleges and 3,249 women from 274 coed institutions, the authors find larger improvements in academic ability at



Though they had no male classmates, these 1995 Wellesley College seniors were all smiles at their commencement.

the women’s colleges, at least as measured by how the women themselves judge their capacities. After four years at the coed institutions, 76.7 percent of the women rated their academic ability as either “above average” or in “the highest 10 percent”—a 4.5-point increase over the 1987 figure. At the women’s

colleges, meanwhile, there was an 11.1-point increase. The women's colleges also did better in raising social self-confidence, according to the authors' analysis. However, "having a high proportion of female faculty in an institution was not a significant predictor of women students' self-reported ability," Kim and Alvarez note.

The students at women's colleges, they suggest, have fewer distractions from academi-

ic study and more opportunities to become "actively involved in student organizations [and] to exercise leadership." While women at the coed colleges seem to have acquired more "practical, job-related skills" (the women's schools stress the liberal arts), that advantage may be insignificant in the long run. Graduates of women's colleges, the authors note, continue to outnumber their sisters in *Who's Who of American Women*.

The Perils of Success

"The Effect of Employment and Training Programs on Entry and Exit from the Welfare Caseload"
by Robert A. Moffitt, in *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* (Winter 1996), Univ. of Pennsylvania, 3620 Locust Walk, Ste. 3100, Philadelphia, Pa. 19104-6372.

Conservatives have delighted for years in pointing out the unanticipated consequences of liberal social programs. Now, it appears that some measures dear to conservative hearts might have some unanticipated consequences of their own. Take the most dearly held conviction of the new consensus on welfare policy: that job training programs will move the poor off welfare and into private-sector jobs, thus shrinking the welfare rolls.

What few of the experts seem to have considered, argues Moffitt, an economist at Johns Hopkins University, is that the more such efforts succeed, the more poor people likely will be attracted to welfare. That would be fine if the main object is to help poor people improve their skills and get jobs,

but not if it is simply to shrink the welfare rolls. Ironically, the best way to discourage welfare might be to require recipients to participate in job training efforts that are ineffective. Moffitt uses a simulation model of welfare participation to illustrate the various possibilities.

The last major federal overhaul of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in 1988 required the states to set up so-called Job Opportunities and Basic Skills programs, but set only modest goals for participation. More than half of adult AFDC recipients are ordinarily exempt from job-training requirements for various reasons. The more hard-nosed approach now favored by many political leaders might produce surprising results.

PRESS & MEDIA

Assessing 'Public Journalism'

"From the Citizen Up" by Mark Jurkowitz, in *Forbes MediaCritic* (Winter 1996), P.O. Box 762, Bedminster, N.J. 07921.

"Public journalism" is the latest fad in the newspaper business. No one is quite sure what the phrase means, but a good many editors are trying to put it into practice anyway, apparently hoping to win over disenchanting readers with an upbeat display of journalistic good citizenship.

Proponents such as Jay Rosen, director of New York University's Project on Public Life and the Press, believe that public journalism can "improve democracy," while critics such as Max Frankel, the former executive editor of the *New York Times*, worry that the press could end up

compromising its traditional mission and itself. Jurkowitz, ombudsman for the *Boston Globe*, examines four of the roughly 200 "public journalism" projects launched in recent years.

- The *San Jose Mercury News* published a lengthy investigative series last year on corruption in the California State Assembly. Then it "formed a brigade of about 30 activists who visited Sacramento, grilled state legislators, attended lobbying training seminars, and tracked bills and campaign contributions." Jurkowitz lauds the reporting, but questions the second