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Tuition hikes or workers' rights?

BY ANDY MULKERIN

As the University of Pittsburgh's Board of Trustees convened in Wesley W. Posvar Hall to discuss the merits of raising tuition for students for the eighth year in a row Monday, a group of concerned students and activists gathered outside on Forbes Avenue to tell the board and the public that another tuition hike could be credited to nothing more than corporate greed.

Members of Pitt's Students in Solidarity organized a rally of about 15 people chanting radical cheers and educating passers by about the University's policies on same-sex partner benefits and a living wage.

Students held signs saying things like "Tuition Hike + Capital Campaign = Corporate Greed" and suggested that Chancellor Mark Nordenberg could be compared to a welfare queen.

The tuition hike, 14 percent for in-state students and 10 percent for those from out of state, comes one month after the University announced the wild success of its capital campaign, which raised its goal of \$500 million one year before that goal was scheduled to be met. The capital campaign has been extended in hopes of raising \$1 billion by 2007.

The student activists pointed out that while the



photo by Nathan Shaffer

Pitt students hold up signs on the streetcorner in protest of the tuition hike.

fundraising goal was exceeded, the money is not being used to keep tuition costs down- which would enable more low-income students to attend Pitt- or to pay employees of the university a living wage. They also noted that while low-wage full time employees who also take classes at the university were given a slight pay raise last year, the cost of their computing fee went up too, rendering the raise essentially pointless.

Another matter tackled by the protestors was the fact that Pitt, unlike many other local employers, does not offer health benefits to same-sex partners of its employees. Earlier in the summer a special committee appointed by Chancellor Nordenberg announced that, while same-sex benefits were a viable option for the future, it would

not be "prudent" to offer them at this time. The reasoning behind this decision was that state legislators may not like the idea of giving same-sex benefits, and therefore would pull funding from the university.

F.Y.I.

For more information on the living wage campaign at Pitt, visit www.pitt.edu/~leftists

Come see the video project of the global IMC:
IndyMedia Newsreal August 2002

Tuesday Aug. 20, 7:30 pm
Porter Hall Room 125C
Carnegie Mellon Univ.

Donations benefit the Pittsburgh IMC

A yinzer in Atenco

BY WILL RAT

You take the Mexico City subway to the end of the line. You get out and there is a bus terminal. You search for the bus going to Texcoco, in an hour or hour and a half, it still looks like Mexico City then you begin to see "NO AIRPORT IN ATENCO!" and "LAND YES! PLANES NO!" painted on the walls that face the highway. A tiny bit further and you see the barricades blocking the roads to enter San Salvador Atenco, community in rebellion.

We got off the bus and walked past a barricade that was partially taken apart to allow the residents and supply trucks to enter and leave. Atenco was functioning normally. The government and the police were/are gone but the town functions as any other. The restaurants, stores, bakeries, internet cafes continue to operate and the campesinos continue to work the fields.

We walked down the street stopping to take photos of the revolutionary mural and anti-airport art that adorn the city walls since the residents of Atenco chased out the police and the government. We went to the town square where the newly collectivized police and municipal trucks are parked. We met with one of the residents, who took us up on the stage that they have
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Pitt hikes tuition

The following is the report of an IMC writer -- the only student to gain access to the board meeting.

BY NATHAN SHAFFER

The University Of Pittsburgh Board of Trustees raised tuition for the 2003 fiscal year with no visible student dialogue despite a report of revenue increases in most areas.

Citing "difficult economic times in the Commonwealth and across the country," the board passed a 10% tuition increase for out of state students and a 14% increase for in state students at their meeting on Monday, July 15. The board also reported a 10% gain in revenues from research funded by outside sources.

Choosing to appropriate funds for "research, infrastructure" and capital investment, the board gave no notice to a student action demanding responsible use of university funds.

These resolutions were passed without debate or audible dissent in a voice vote.

The Board of Trustees tacitly expressed a decidedly anti-student and anti-media position by denying students and several Independent Media representatives entry to the public meeting. Security representatives claimed that available seating had already been occupied and that standing was not permitted. Members of the corporate media easily gained access to the full meeting.

A single IMC reporter gained access to the meeting to find four empty seats in the public observation area and approximately twelve people standing for the duration of the meeting. The IMC reporter was the only University student in attendance.

Statements from apologetic security personnel laid blame on the trustees for the closed atmosphere of the meeting. One security officer explained, "I was not lying about the number of seats. That information came from inside the room. I did not make that decision."

a yinzer in atenco

(continued from front)

built. It serves as a place to have both public announcements and entertainment. He announced our presence to the town and 60 or so people were there to listen. We introduced ourselves and told the folks we were there to support their struggle and learn what was happening in Atenco. We were asked if we have similar problems in our country, and answered, yes, our government is also engaged in the process of development projects that benefit the few at the cost of the many. We thanked the people of Atenco for their struggle; we were applauded. A collective meal was prepared for anyone who was hungry, and we were then given a place to stay in the municipal auditorium where all guests are welcomed. Other groups arrived during our stay, Basque college students, teachers, high school students from Vera Cruz, anarcho punks from Mexico City, all to show support and solidarity with the rebels in Atenco.

Atenco is friendly but it is on a state of alert. At night the campesinos hop in the back of the police vehicles with their machetes and patrol the town and the fields igniting watch fires where they are needed. One of the campesinos asked while we were out in the field "Do you get much sleep in the united states?" I looked back confused by the question he continued, "we don't get much sleep and there..." he pointed into the distance at Mexico city "... the government and the police

never sleep. So we light these fires to let them know we are watching." One night a patrol did find police sneaking into the town. The police fled. Other times surveying crews and what not have been found in the land expropriated for the airport. They were likewise chased out. All night there is watch that sometimes turns into a party outside the municipal building, stray dogs, orphans, campesinos, teachers, and artists drink coffee, sing, and keep watch.

We were taken on a tour of the land that has been stolen for the airport; land the government says is unproductive. The land is filled with corn, beans, tomatoes, and alfalfa; all except the tomatoes are organic. Likewise the government says there isn't enough water there for the land. We all laughed when we saw the cisterns pumping water that irrigate the fields. The land is on top of a lake, which provides water for the fields. The same lake would also cause the proposed airport to sink into it after only 25 years. The government also plans to destroy the mountains ringing the area to get materials like gravel and sand to build the airport. After the fields we go to what appears to be a large hill covered in cacti. Looking closer, it turns out to be a pyramid buried by hundreds of years of sediment. Stones covered with hieroglyphs, stone chairs, painted pottery shards and obsidian blades are found all over the hillside along with cacti over 100 years old. The airport will take out this sacred site too.

We met with people from

elementary school children to 85 year old Miguel whose brother was killed in the war for the land while riding in Zapata's army. No one of them want this airport. The campesinos pose the question, "we aren't going anywhere by plane, so who is the airport for?" Miguel told us he was there when Atenco became ejidal land (collectivized land holdings owned by a community in perpetuity) during the presidency of Lazaro Cardenas, the last time he said Mexico had good government.

We asked another resident what had changed when you chased out the government. He said that nothing changed except "the bastards were gone; we make all the decisions now together." We asked what he thought would happen in the future and he responded with "Well if there is no land, there is no future." The residents of Atenco have shown they will do whatever it takes to keep their land and way of life. Meanwhile, their struggle continues.

On July 8th residents of the municipalities in rebellion marched with machetes in hand from the Mexico City airport to the center of Mexico City. Thousands of people, young and old, from worker, campesino, ideigenous, environmentalist, squatter, and teachers unions converged on the Zocolo in front of the federal government buildings, and burned gigantic paper airplanes and U.S. flags which they say is the flag of Mexican President Vicente Fox and announce again **THE LAND IS NOT FOR SALE!**