Let me tell each of you a little story about a young, Southern girl trying to make it in the Big City. She had enjoyed two delightful semesters at Pace, and was quite content there, having enough money from working to enjoy herself and enough money from financial aid to afford school. However, this child (as you newsletter recipients are well aware) never was one to adhere to deadlines, and assuming that the FAFSA application deadline was arbitrary and tardiness was without consequences, she waited until eight days past the due date to submit the application. This error in judgment revealed itself to be an egregious one when the FAFSA award notices were sent out and the girl found that she had lost $9000 in grant money. It turned out that, though the deadline was random, it was certainly not harmless. Pace’s financial aid department had every intention of abiding by this deadline, and any truant applications, whether they were eight days or six months late, were only considered for aid after all the timely applications had been awarded their fullest aid packages.

Now, this seems like a logical course of action for the financial aid department to take, perhaps one that you would expect, so why is so much stress placed on reminding students to submit their FAFSA on time? Those of us working in the Honors office witnessed the fallout first hand last year when students began to receive federal aid packages that amounted to thousands
less than the previous year. Bill worked for months trying to help the growing list of students lacking the funds to continue at Pace. Many of the situations were rectified, but many were not.

Though I still do not understand the significance of Pace’s particularly early FAFSA deadline, I, along with many others, learned my lesson. It should be a top priority over winter break and within the first few weeks of the spring semester to gather the information needed from your parents and to submit the form.

**FAFSA PRIORITY DEADLINE: Wednesday, 15 February 2006**

Make it your ONLY deadline.

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**Bill’s Notes**

**Thinking About Grades**

For those of you who received at least a 3.3 grade point average this past semester, and who completed at least 12 credits, this column is not for you. But for those of you who didn’t get a 3.3 overall GPA, especially freshmen, there is a possibility of more rain and more pain from grades if you don’t take action now. If you’ll now assume with me that September has ended, I have some critical info that may help.

1. **The critical number for the big money in your scholarships is 3.0.** Financial Aid will eliminate all your academic scholarships if your overall GPA is 2.99 or below. If you fall between 3.0 and 3.29 in overall GPA, your main scholarship is safe but your Honors supplemental scholarship needs a 3.3. But you won’t be kicked out of Honors for falling below 3.3 after one year—no one loses the laptop or the privileges. However, money is not in my hands, so pay attention.

2. **Math matters here.** You have to figure out what you need to get back above a 3.0 or a 3.3; if you’re a frosh, that probably means your Spring semester has to be as far above the line as you were below it in the Fall.
Bill’s Notes

Thinking About Grades

Continued...

If you were at 2.9 for the Fall, you need to get a 3.7 in the Spring (assuming the same number of credits) to average 3.3, and it’s only the overall average that matters.

3. What to do if you’ve done poorly? First, make sure you’re not overloaded with work and school and other things—no one in grade trouble should take more than 5 courses. Cut back on your paid work if you can; I believe no one can maximize their grades with more than 10-15 hours paid work a week. Second, schedule at least 28 hours for schoolwork each week. That means lock up those hours, 4 hours per day that you promise to do NOTHING but school. No cell phones, no internet (except for courses), no e-mail, no friends, nothing else. Just like a job, where you have to be there on time and work the whole time or get fired, so too should you have times that are fixed for studying without possible distractions.

4. Rethink your courses for the Spring if you got a C - or lower. Retaking a course (and re-computing the grade—you need to file a form to do this) is the quickest way to improve your GPA. If you’ve gotten poor grades in your major field, you need to rethink that, and perhaps switch majors (that means look at your Econ and Math grades if you’re in Business, Bio and Chem. in Science majors, they may be telling you something).

5. Finally, talk with me, about what happened and what can be done. There are often lots of things that can help, but only if you let me know. Let me help.
The New Year, for most intents and purposes, has come and gone. The only reason we really care about 01 January is because of foolish notions of sorting our neatly pre-packaged lives. (Most of you call them resolutions and they usually have something to do with losing weight.) So, when fifty-six percent of a recently polled female population said they would much rather be thinner than smarter, I deduced that New Year’s Day is more of a girl-y holiday than Valentine’s Day. It doesn’t stop at that. It’s a holiday celebrated mostly for our escapist generation, one which would much rather fix the minor individual problems than think on a greater, more selfless scale.

Instead of trying to find the perfect swimsuit that accentuates your figure while guzzling down beer after beer during Spring Break - Cancun, our generation needs to take note of its degenerating lifestyle. However, a simple realization of how we’re losing the fight against our own rights does no good if we are not willing to do something, or even any thing, about it.

Our education does not and should not always take place within the confines of a window-less Pace University classroom. If your professors are not facilitating progressive intellectual discussions like you would want them to, then it is your duty to take the initiative to make those discussions happen in the hallways, in parks, on the Brooklyn Bridge.

Your guilty pleasure of Wednesday night television or whichever day you might prefer on your 500 channel television set is not freedom of choice, it is confinement. We are our worst oppressors because we are buying into this façade of freedom. Turn off the television; pick up a newspaper (and I don’t mean Page Six). There are too many among us who decide that it is okay for us to perpetuate escapism in our own lives because there are enough people out there who do care about current events. What you are forgetting is each and every thing any one of us do is political, whether you like it or not. So, stop trying to escape from it and do some thing, anything.

For starters, become involved in the world around you by volunteering. The Center for Community Outreach is sponsoring a trip to New Orleans where you will be able to help with various projects to restore shelters and traditional housing. Next, read up on members of Congress who are up for re-election this year. Get involved with their campaigns.

The fog is only as real as you want it to be.
DATEBOOK

Feb 11: Ice Skating, Central Park,
Meet in front of Pace Plaza at 12:30, or at Wollman Rink in Central Park by 1:15.
We pay admittance and rental of skates if you don't own any.

Feb 13: Study Abroad Info meeting, 12:20-1:15 room Y22.
All those interested in studying abroad at any time during Pace years, but especially those interested in going in 2006-07 should attend.

Feb 14: Honors Valentines' celebration: flowers for all, candy for all, and Leisler's heart celebration, starting in the Honors office at 3:30 p.m.

Feb 14: Vagina Monologues, 6 p.m. Schimmel. Honors reimburses $5 of ticket price.

Feb 21: Harlem Wizards charity basketball game for Multiple Myeloma against Pace University’s faculty and staff, including Bill Offutt, Dr. Geoff. Brackett, Dr. Meghana Nayak, Dr. Jonathon Silverman, and other basketball incompetents. 7 p.m. in the gym.

Feb 25: Honors movies. Last chance to see Oscar nominees and others before Oscars on Mar. 5

Spring Break Trip: MONTREAL, CANADA
March 18 - 20

I am asking all who are going to put down a $65 per person deposit (based on the current exchange rate—if the US$ goes down we may ask for more, if it goes up you may get a refund) by next Friday, 2/10. You may pay it in cash or by check, and I will accept a check post-dated for March 18 (I won't cash it til then to allow you to get the money in the account, but be sure you have the money then—I'm not happy with bounced checks). You may also indicate your choice of roommate(s), if you have one.

There will be a mandatory meeting in February. Look out for e-mails regarding that.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) American citizens must take a passport (best) or a photo-ID driver's license plus a birth certificate. If you are not an American citizen, you must have a green card. If you do not have one of these (if you are not an American citizen and are here on a student visa), you will need a visa for Canada and I will have Audrey investigate this week how to do that—it may not be possible for you to go but we will try. If you are in this category, start now investigating on your own and share with us what you find out.

2) Rooms: price is calculated on 4 to a room. If you know who you want to room with, please let us know and we'll accommodate. If you wish to have only 2 or 3 in a room, you will be asked to pay more ($86 each for 3, $130 each for 2).

3) We will leave early on Saturday Mar 18—7:45 a.m. You should be here by 7:30 so I can check your documents; you don't get on the bus without the right ID. We will return late on Monday Mar 20, probably 11 p.m.

4) You will have to sign a waiver form to go on the bus, prepared by Pace's lawyers. We will hold a meeting in late February to distribute these forms, get your signatures, and talk about the trip. No one gets on the bus without the form being signed.

5) In Montreal, the daylight hours will be allocated to tourist sites, in all probability walking or subway rides away from the hotel. I will distribute a list of potential sites and coordinate the touring according to your indicated interests. After dinner (and you get one dinner paid for, either Sat or Sun night), you're on your own.

6) Guests: those who have indicated they wish to bring a guest may sign up/pay for 1 (one) Pace student as a guest at this time. Those who wish to bring 2 Pace students or a non-Pace student will have to wait til next week to see how we are doing on space before those can be paid for. The priority is Pace guests then non-Pace guests, and if space gets tight, the time of your deposit is the tiebreaker on guests, so if you want a guest, pay early.