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National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education has come out with “Measuring Up 2006: The National Report Card on Higher Education” a comprehensive report on the performance of higher education in the nation and the states. The findings of the report were presented on Sept. 7 at the National Press Club. The report grades the performance of the nation and all 50 states in five key areas: college preparation, college participation, college affordability, college completion, and benefits to the state. Categories, grades, and indicators are designed to stimulate state, national, and educational policy. In addition, the study includes international comparisons for the U.S. and all 50 states on several of these areas. The report also highlights 10-year trends in performance in the states. It is noteworthy that in previous report, Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Utah states were assigned “A” grades. The current edition of the report will be fourth in the series of reports, which the organization has published since 2000.

U.S. News Rankings push Howard north

U.S. News & World Report’s annual ranking of ‘America’s Best Colleges’ has moved Howard University to the 88th place-up five places, in its 2007 guidebook. The university, in recent years built the Louis Stokes Health Sciences Library, the School of Law Library on its District of Columbia campuses, and has increased the number of student scholarships. Howard was also bestowed 22nd rank-up from 24th-in the ‘Great Schools, Great Prices’ rankings. This category compares the U.S. News ranking of universities with its need-based financial aid. Comparing more than 1,400 higher education institutions, U.S. News categorizes and then weighs the performance of every category. Along with 247 institutions, Howard is in the “National Universities,” group which includes private, public, undergraduate and doctoral institutions.

\$10 million grant to Vanderbilt University

Vanderbilt University has received a grant of 10 million from the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences, for its Peabody College of Education and Human Development. The money will facilitate a new national research and development center named National Center on Performance Incentives. The center will help provide information to educators and policymakers on how monetary incentives given to teachers, administrators and schools, is reflecting the performance and achievement of students. The research data will facilitate policymakers to decide the best utilization of available resources to improve student lending. The initial project will observe the students accomplishments related to bonuses offered to professors on both personal and institutional performance. With the launch of the new center, Peabody becomes the only school having two national research and development centers with grants flowing in from the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences. Partnering Vanderbilt in its work at the center, are a number of education institutions along with Santa Monica-based The RAND Corporation, a non-profit public policy research institute.



Arkansas colleges may get \$250 million boost

A higher education bond proposal marked 10 Arkansas public universities and 22 two-year colleges to receive \$250 million for infrastructure improvements, technology upgrades, and to pay off existing bonds. On August 9 Gov. Mike Huckabee called for a second special election for the bond package, which will overlap the general elections of November 7. The highest beneficiary would be The University of Arkansas in Fayetteville that will receive about \$16 million. The University plans to utilize the money for construction and renovation of its buildings-it will build a general purpose building for more classrooms and laboratories; renovate the Chickasaw Hall; and build a Delta Center for Economic Development.