Mid-Year Budget Cuts
An Unwelcome Burden to the UNO Community

By Courtney Widmer
Managing Editor

With the University of New Orleans facing impending mid-year budget cuts, students, faculty and the entire UNO community face faculty layoffs, tough times and difficult decisions.

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal called upon the Louisiana State University System to implement drastic mid-year budget cuts. The LSU System, which UNO is a member of, submitted mid-year budget cuts to the tune of $39.1 million. A cut of $3.8 million was imposed upon UNO.

The UNO community received instructions on the budget cuts the day before the winter break. UNO Chancellor Timothy Ryan and the Administration were given until January 7, 2010 to execute said budget cuts.

As Ryan explained, "The state hit us with mid-year budget cuts, which amounted to 7.56 percent of our state appropriations. When a cut comes at the middle of the year, since half your money is already gone, that 7.56 percent is really over 15 percent because half the money is already spent."

As a result of the $3.8 million cut, nine UNO employees were laid off.

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Student Opinion

The Bayou Brawl Not Appointed Unto Wrath

By Jason Waguespack
Staff Columnist

Following the horrific earthquake in Haiti, television evangelist Pat Robertson announced about the cause of this calamity on his television program, "Something happened a long time ago in Haiti, and people might not want to talk about it. They were under the heel of the French... and they got together and swore a pact to the devil. They said, 'We will serve you if you will get us free from the French.' True story. And so the devil said, 'Okay, it's a deal... Ever since, they have been cursed by one thing after another, desperately poor.' To which a lot of people probably thought, 'Okay, where was the site of the signing ceremony? Did the Lord of Darkness put his signature on a piece of parchment? Did someone take the minutes of this meeting?'

Robertson has previously attributed some misfortunes and calamities as judgments from God, such as Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's stroke in 2005, Katrina's impact on New Orleans, and the most infamous example, the 9/11 attacks.

This thinking isn't new and not unique to Robertson. It's based out of the premonition of God's judgment portrayed in the biblical account of God's curse on those who sinned against him. Again, it's neither new nor surprising, but in the media age such pronouncements can spread quickly following a tragedy. But does Robertson's rhetoric even stand up against the Bible itself?

In the Scriptures, God typically is depicted as doing things to people through a person, usually a prophet, about a coming judgment. Think Jonah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc. Now, was anyone told, "Hey, there's an earthquake coming, you better repent!" How about 9/11? I think if someone had announced that hijacked airplanes were going to fly into the World Trade Center, we'd have known who he is by now. Also, the peoples and nations God judges judgment upon are incredibly wicked, to a man. Many remember Abraham's famous plea to God to not destroy the city of Sodom if only ten righteous people lived there. As it turned out, there was only one, Abraham's nephew Lot, who was rescued from the destruction by angels. Several books of the Bible depict God's judgment upon the old nations of Israel and Judah, who had taken the practice of sacrificing children into fiery pits to appease a fertility god. But the book of Ezekiel reveals that God would not have judged Israel if one man was found to be righteous.

Now, was Haiti filled with so many evil, wicked people, that an earthquake could hit and indiscriminately kill so many and not harm a good person? Similarly, was anyone really going to believe there were fewer than ten righteous people in the World Trade Center or on those hijacked airplanes? Worse than that, this supposed pact with the devil took place over two centuries ago! Why is God only getting around to business now? And for that matter, can anyone explain why an earthquake never took out, say, Joseph, inis, and Zeke?" Happy Birthday, John Paul II!

The world is a dangerous place where bad and tragic things happen. Christian ministers and evangelists have their hands full trying to explain why God doesn't stop bad things from happening. None of these things is being done by God that is actively behind these events, and they shouldn't be予以 otherwise.

As survivors pick themselves out of the rubble of an earthquake or a terrorist attack, how will they handle a message that God sent their neighbors or their loved ones to a horrible and brutal death? Jason Waguespack can be contacted at jwaguespack@asu.edu.

The Spunky Scrawl
Reefer Madness

By Jane Molinany
Staff Columnist

New Jersey's Governor Jon Corzine legalized medicinal marijuana today, Tuesday January 19 making it the fourteenth state in the nation allowing patients with diseases such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, and AIDS to reap the benefits of cannabis.

According to an article in the New York Times, "within nine months, patients with a prescription for marijuana can from their doctors should be able to obtain it at one of six locations." These are dispensaries that carry chronically ill patients with marijuana but not more than two ounces for each month. However, Don't plan your trip to Trenton just yet. Being one of the few states on the East coast to legalize medicinal marijuana, New Jersey has, "the most restrictive medical marijuana law in the nation...[forbidding] patients from growing their own...and from using it in public."

Obviously we have come a long way from Reefer Madness, being no longer convinced that after smoking a joint, one can have a free ride and murder will follow, but can this plant actually help the terminally ill, can it really cure ailments like Tourette's syndrome?

Undoubtedly, there have been a slew of those "of course it can" individuals, the ones with the green, yellow, and back-backs sacks forever affected by the doors of marijuana has opened for them spiritually.

As ProCon.org states it, the core question is: should marijuana be a medical option? The Assistant Professor of Neurology at the University of Alberta stated that, "twenty-one percent of subjects had used marijuana in the past year with the majority of users reporting beneficial effects on seizures."

The Institute of Medicine reported that, "for terminal patients suffering debilitating pain or nausea and for whom all indicated medications have failed to provide relief, the medical benefits of smoked marijuana might outweigh the harm."

If we consider other options of consuming marijuana including vaporization and capulation, the consequences continue to fade.

So, why only four states instead of fifty? Why is it legal for us to drink alcohol until we are psychologically inebriated or even dead?

Whether it is the FED's or the gate-way theory that's keeping people a safe distance from wacky tabacky, their hold is let up, or state's rights are bleeding through.

A spokesman for the Office of National Drug Control Policy states that the effects of marijuana are, "on the respiratory system and impaired judgment..." both reasons which are also consequences of smoking tobacco and alcohol consumption.

Another effect of marijuana, and perhaps the most threatening to the federal government, is the effect it has on those not ill. You know, the elevated feeling and incessant hunger that leads one to discover the waffle z more. The truth is that a big percentage of weed crusaders are not looking for nausea relieved from cancer, but the freedom to inhale whatever they want for any or no reason at all.

The side opposed to medicinal marijuana relies on statistics that claim, "rates of daily marijuana use among 12th graders tripled from 1992 to 1999 and have stubbornly resisted significant change since then. In 2007, approximatively 204,000 high school seniors (15.1 percent) used marijuana on a daily basis," taken from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.

If people consume marijuana illegally, could it indirectly prevent eventual legalization elsewhere? Should the defense of cannabis be motivated more by its ability to help people or by its recreational pleasure?

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