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and student accounts over the summer and ultimately the whole year. "We often hear complaints about unanswered or delayed responses of phone calls and emails between these offices and students, and we are already in the process of trying to figure what needs to be done to make things better in this area," said Barner. "No Spartan should have to worry about their financial aid approvals or any other paperwork because it keeps them from learning and enjoying their college experience."

Both Bethea and Barner are

part of two well-known Greek organizations on NSU's campus. Bethea is a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity and Barner is a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. They plan to work with their respective organizations, as well as other student organizations, in order to raise the male retention rate here at Norfolk State.

"With the current male-to-female (ratio) at 4-1, it is important to even the playing field," Bethea said. "We want others on board to help raise the male retention rate by being mentors and role models to motivate the males that attend NSU to graduate."

Barner went on to explain, that by the next fall semester, some of the organizations and committees currently under the Student Government umbrella will no longer be connected with SGA, making it more vital for their support on their new initiatives.

"NSU should expect our SGA administration to be more accessible and we want students to see us as a bridge between them and the university's administration," Bethea said. "We even want to make the Spartan experience more interactive other than just Homecoming and Spartan Fest. SGA's presence should be felt year round."



SGA President elect Quashawn Bethea (right) and Vice-President elect Tory Barner (left) prepare for their future in spartan student government. Photo courtesy of Norfolk State University's Student Government Association

DECLINE IN FEDERAL DEFICIT COULD AFFECT STUDENT PELL GRANTS

By Danielle Kirsh and Brittany Stanley

The government's federal deficit is set to drop to \$514 billion this year. This decline is a tremendous drop from last year's deficit and the lowest since President Barack Obama took office five years ago.

According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report, the reason for the drop is the higher tax revenues from the rebounding economy and sharp curbs on agency spending.

It is predicted that the economy will continue to rebound and grow at a 3.1 percent rate this year and by at least 3.4 percent next year.

Even with the budget deficit dropping this year, the CBO predicts that in the coming years it will increase by \$100 billion a year because of the slow growth in the economy.

The government has many options available to help reduce the deficit. One of the options they are looking at is reducing the amount of Pell grants being administered and giving it to only the "neediest students", as reported by the CBO.

The Federal Pell Grant Program is one of the largest sources of grant money for low-income students in colleges and universities.

The CBO said that lowering grant amounts or raising the eligibility requirements could help reduce the deficit.

The CBO is considering

taking away the Pell grants from students who exceed \$3,850 in the expected family contribution (EFC). In this situation, only 6 percent of recipients would lose their eligibility. The CBO estimates the government would save a total of \$6 billion from 2014 through 2023 if they used this option.

The other option they are considering is allowing only those with an EFC of zero to get the Pell grant. If they administer this, the amount of students losing their eligibility would rise to 35 percent. With this option, the CBO predicts the total savings to be \$97 billion through 2023.

A federal deficit consists of the amount of money being spent by the government that exceeds the total receipts for the fiscal year. This means the government is spending less money than what they owe.

The decline in the deficit came after the government shut down in October 2013. Politicians had to agree on a budget in order for the government to reopen in what was nearly the longest government shut down in United States' history.

During President Obama's term, the federal deficit exceeded \$1 trillion in 2010 because of the Wall Street bailout in 2009. Since then, the federal deficit has been steadily declining.

SAT drops maximum score to focus on math and critical thinking

By Danielle Kirsh

The SAT test that most college students have come to know when applying for college has lowered their standards. By eliminating the essay portion, offering practice tests and more clear expectations for prospective college students, the test is now substantially easier.

This is just the second time since the test was released 88 years ago that it has been redesigned.

The current SAT test that most are familiar with contains math, critical thinking, and essay sections, each with a maximum score of 800 totaling 2400 for a perfect score.

In the redesigned version of the test, the essay is taken out, leaving a math and verbal section.

In addition to eliminating the essay section of the test, the host of the test, the College Board, announced they would be offering new incentives to high school students who will be taking the test during their college application process.

The College Board plans to offer new SAT-preparation tutorials online for free rather than having students take costly classes to prepare for the test.

The SAT vocabulary words that have plagued college-bound students will also be filtered through to include words that are used only in college and future careers.

The quarter-point deduction for each wrong answer on the multiple-choice sections of the test will also be eliminated.

Launched in 1929, the SAT test has undergone a few name changes and curriculum overhauls during its time.

When the test was first administered, the SAT was known as the Scholastic Aptitude Test. In 1994 after the word aptitude was no longer favorable to use, the name changed to the Scholastic Assessment Test. A few years later, it became just the letters SAT.

In 2005, the College Board added the essay section to the test and made 2400 a perfect score.

With the elimination of the essay section comes more focus on the math and critical reading sections.

The math section will focus more on algebra, problem solving and data analysis with calculator use being limited.

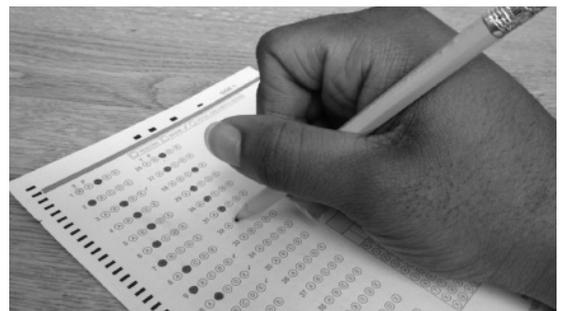
The "evidence-based read-

ing and writing" section will become the new critical reading section. This section will focus on expanding the reading comprehension of science, history and social studies passages.

Each test will also have excerpts from documents that have been monumental to American history, such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech.

With the maximum score of 2400, 57 percent of students who take the SAT test score a 1550 or lower. A score of 1550 or below is known as the "college readiness benchmark."

To eliminate the low test scores and take the stress off of some students, the perfect score will be lowered to 1600 with the essay section becoming optional. A 50-minute time frame to complete that portion of the test will be afforded.



The change in format for the SAT scores may have a positive or negative effect on the incoming freshmen of NSU. Photo credit by Tykhari Coles