

# Increase in unemployment sparks growing interest in graduate schools

By **KIRILL SOBIN**  
STAFF WRITER  
KVD102@PSU.EDU

When unemployment rates go up, so do the number of people trying to get into graduate school. Organizers of the Graduate Management Admission Test, or GMAT - an aptitude exam required for most graduate business schools - reported a 24.5 percent rise in the number of tests taken in 2008, from 2006, compared to a 16.5 percent increase in the prior period.

The graduate students are hoping to boost their strength as a job candidate in a tight market by adding a higher degree; for others, it's simply a way to wait out the economy's lag. But the severity of the current financial crisis also has many higher education officials worried that the sheer

magnitude of the problems may convince some workers that they can't afford to return to school now. These officials are also worried that companies that traditionally support employees who take classes to advance their knowledge or qualifications may not be able to do so.

M.B.A. programs typically see increases in applications in tight economic times, and data collected by The Graduate Management Admission Council suggests that the pattern will be true to past experience for the business schools. Much of the growth, in number of applications, came in biology and health science fields, including nursing, where there is great demand for more practicing nurses and nursing professors. But the increase in applicants is not consistent throughout the

country.

"Overall numbers are down," said Robert Coffman, director of Admissions at Penn State Harrisburg. "Forced by economical reality many companies are not reimbursing educational expenses, many banks are not offering student loans, making it hard to find financing."

According to Coffman, at Penn State Harrisburg applications for post Graduate education are down, however, a new American studies program sparked interest. To encourage more applications Penn State is looking to expand the number of degrees across different curriculums.

Currently, college is expanding the number of online courses to accommodate the increasing number of students migrating towards online classes.

# Toddler, 6 others shot on Mardi Gras parade route

By **MICHAEL KUNZELMAN**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

A Mardi Gras parade erupted into chaos on Fat Tuesday when a series of gunshots struck seven people, including a toddler. The child was not seriously injured and two suspects were in custody, police said.

The shootings happened near the Garden District about 1:40 p.m. after the last major parade of the celebration, Rex, had ended. A stream of truck floats that follow the parade were passing by when gunfire broke out.

"It sounded like a string of fireworks, so I knew it was more than one shooter," said Toni Labat, 29, a limousine company manager. She was with her two children, a 2-year-old boy and a 10-year-old girl "Everybody was petrified. They hit the ground, the floats stopped, everybody on the floats ducked," Labat said.

Labat said one man dragged himself on the ground screaming for help after being wounded and another man was gasping for air and bleeding from his mouth.

Police spokesman Bob Young said the victims — three men ages 50, 33 and 20, two young

women ages 20 and 17 and a 15-year-old boy — were taken to area hospitals. Young said the 20-month-old baby was grazed by a bullet and not seriously hurt.

The two most seriously injured victims were shot in the stomach and underwent surgery, said Officer Janssen Valencia, though he didn't know the men's conditions. The others were listed in stable condition Tuesday night with injuries not considered life-threatening.

Police believe the victims were bystanders hit at random, though a motive for the shooting hasn't been determined, Valencia said. Their names weren't released.

Dr. Jim Parry, 41, a surgeon who was with a gathering of doctors near the shooting site, ran over to tend to one man who he said had been shot in the abdomen. "He kept asking me, 'Was I shot? Was I shot?'"

Paramedics arrived and took over for the Air Force reservist. "I'm off to Afghanistan this summer. Damn, this is more dangerous than Afghanistan," Parry said.

Two men, 19-year-old Mark Brooks and 18-year-old Louis Lazone, both of New Orleans, were each booked with seven

counts of attempted first-degree murder. Brooks also faces a charge of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, Young said. It was not immediately known if the men had attorneys. Three weapons believed used in the shooting were recovered, Young said.

The violence along the oak-lined Uptown streetcar line marred what had been a generally peaceful day of revelry in which hundreds of thousands of people partied in the streets on the final day of Carnival. Another shooting was reported on Friday night after an argument, but otherwise, the event was generally problem-free.

Beau Beals, 45, said he was outside a house party on St. Charles Avenue when the shooting erupted. He said he and other revelers tossed children over a metal fence to get them to safety, but others kept waiting for beads and other trinkets being tossed from the floats as if nothing had happened. "They had an ambulance out here picking the guy up off the street and people didn't stop vying for throws," Beals said.

# Feds: Ex-Pa. senator spent big, always wanted more

By **MARYCLAIRE DALE**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

A once-powerful Pennsylvania senator "obliterated" the line between right and wrong when he used his staff for constant personal and political chores over many years, a federal prosecutor said Monday.

Former Sen. Vincent Fumo, 65, vastly overpaid his staff for their extra work and blind loyalty — and expected silence once reporters and FBI agents started asking questions in 2003, Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Zauzmer said.

Many former staffers testified during the four-month trial, admitting they kept track of income from their boss's rental properties, oversaw mansion renovations and drove a state vehicle to Martha's Vineyard to meet Fumo's borrowed yacht.

"You're paying them extra out of state money for their loyalty and devotion and their willingness to do extra work," Zauzmer said in closing arguments. "Why did they do it? Perhaps for money, perhaps for proximity to the throne."

The government used 1,300 exhibits and 82 witnesses to try to make its \$3.5 million fraud and obstruction case against Fumo, while the defense called 25 witnesses, including Fumo and Gov. Ed Rendell.

Rendell, a rival Philadelphia Democrat, said Fumo worked hard for the state. But he agreed that even successful lawmakers must follow the rules.

"In Fumo World, the same rules that apply to the rest of us, didn't apply," Zauzmer told the mostly female jury. "He did not just cross the line, he obliterated it."

The long-powerful Fumo, who served for 30 years, came to control more than 90 state jobs, including those of his three drivers. Fumo said he personally set his staffers' salaries.

Fumo earned a nearly six-figure state salary and millions more as a banker and lawyer. But no matter how much he earned, he seemed to spend more, as evidenced by his own testimony that a friend gave him \$1 million in 2005 to help him settle his second divorce, and e-mails describing his sometimes rocky finances.

"He spent everything that came into his hands, and he always wanted more," said Zauzmer, who said Fumo's power got to his head, and he came to view Senate resources as his own.

Zauzmer is set to resume his

closing arguments in the 139-count case Tuesday, and will then be followed by defense lawyers for Fumo and co-defendant Ruth Arnao, a longtime top aide.

During a week on the stand, Fumo said his staff did favors for him on their own time because they were like family. He admitted to some mistakes along the way, allowing a neighborhood charity he founded pay for political polls, cars, expensive power tools and other items. But he considered the expenditures minor — and called the Justice Department probe political.

"I was a target because I was the most prominent Democrat in Pennsylvania," Fumo testified last week.

The South Philadelphia native, who has beaten two previous indictments, retired from the Senate last year to focus on his criminal case. He is also charged with defrauding a seaport museum and the nonprofit Citizens' Alliance for Better Neighborhoods, which was run by Arnao and received a \$17 million gift from Peco Energy during state electricity deregulation talks.

Fumo owned four homes in three states, including his Philadelphia mansion — now for sale for \$5.5 million, down from \$7 million; a waterfront estate in Florida; a New Jersey shore home; and a sprawling farm near Harrisburg. Instead of hiring workers to help him renovate or run the homes, he used Senate staffers to pay his bills, hire contractors and even wait for a repairman to arrive, prosecutors said.

While vacationing in Florida, he would have his district staff in Philadelphia buy and overnight ship him such mundane household items as hair spray and tea, according to prosecutors who chased down FedEx receipts and e-mails. In just one example, the state paid \$54 to FedEx Fumo a few dollars worth of copy paper in 2005, Zauzmer said.

Yet Fumo was quick to trash anyone who testified against him, Zauzmer said. Fumo told jurors that his ex-girlfriend had a drinking problem, a staffer a gambling problem and a third witness a penchant for exaggeration. And he said his estranged daughter — whose husband was a key government witness — had at one point needed counseling.

"This is someone who is looking out for Number One," Zauzmer said. "And everybody else, if necessary, goes under the bus."