



New hurdle for aspiring lawyers

KERI MURPHY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Students hoping to embark on careers in law will face a revised form of the LSAT next June. The revision was announced last month and is the product of extensive research by the Law School Admissions Council.

The changes are aimed at developing a more accurate barometer of how students will perform in their post-graduate studies, said Wendy Margolis, a spokeswoman for the LSAC.

The most significant change is the replacement of one of four sections in the reading comprehension portion, called comparative reading. Traditionally, questions were based on one long passage; in the new format, questions will address comparisons of two shorter articles.

In past years, students were asked to either defend one of two decision-based scenarios or support one side of a presented argument. The new test will have only one assigned decision prompt. The writing sample will remain unscored as in the previous test, and serve only as an essay for law school admissions.

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A search for linguistic connections



Jonathan Pool
Founder,
Utilika Foundation

TIA GHOSE
THE DAILY

Imagine a world where you could communicate fluently with your computer or work, and play with someone across the world without knowing his language.

The Turing Center, a multidisciplinary UW center founded in 2005 with a multi-million dollar grant from the Utilika Foundation, aims to make such science fiction a reality. The center investigates machine translation of human language, web data mining and web searching. The Turing Center also researches the semantic web, an extension of

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Battling textbook price inflation

State Public Interest Research Groups combine forces to put pressure on publishers

ARLA SHEPARD
THE DAILY

Junior Wendy Tolin was more than annoyed this quarter when she had to make a second trip to the University Book Store.

"I had already spent \$300 on textbooks, so I couldn't believe it when my professor told us we had to get another book," Tolin said. "It cost me \$90."

The average UW student will spend \$945 on textbooks this academic year, according to the Office of Student Financial Aid, as compared to a national average of \$900. With state budget cuts decreasing the amount of available financial aid, buying textbooks is increasingly becoming more of a hassle for students.

WashPIRG and other state Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) are working together to fight against the growing costs of textbooks.

According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the cost of textbooks is 26 percent of the cost of tuition and fees for a full-time student attending a four-year institution and 72 percent for full-time students at two-year institutions.

"The rising cost of textbooks is a serious problem that everyone involved in higher education should be deeply concerned about," said Heather Alpers, the WashPIRG coordinator for the campaign for affordable textbooks.

The Make Textbooks Affordable Campaign is

a joint effort of several state PIRGs. According to their recent report, studies have shown that the overall cost of textbooks has risen at four times the rate of inflation since 1994. The campaign has conducted a three-year study on the costs of textbooks, surveying 60 campus bookstores throughout the country and interviewing faculty members and bookstore managers.

The resulting report, titled *Required Reading: A Look at the Worst Publishing Tactics at Work*, details the strategies publishers use to drive up the prices of college textbooks, seriously undermining students in the process. The research groups came up with six of the most prevalent tactics publishers use, as well as outlining what students, faculty and bookstores can do to fight back.

The report found that on average the cost of a newer textbook edition is 12 percent more than

that of the previous one, which is almost twice the 6.8 percent rate of inflation between 2000 and 2003.

The group also found that half of textbooks are bundled with CDs or workbooks, increasing the textbook cost by an average of 10 percent. Textbook companies also reprint textbooks or issue new editions with few, if any, significant changes.

The UW's WashPIRG chapter plans to send this report to UW faculty members and get feedback, said Alpers.

"We will then compile a UW-based report and send that out to publishers. We believe that this will have a double effect on them," she said.

Slowly but surely, the state PIRGs' efforts have been achieving results. The unfair policies that the textbook industry utilizes "would be

SEE TEXTBOOKS ON PAGE 6

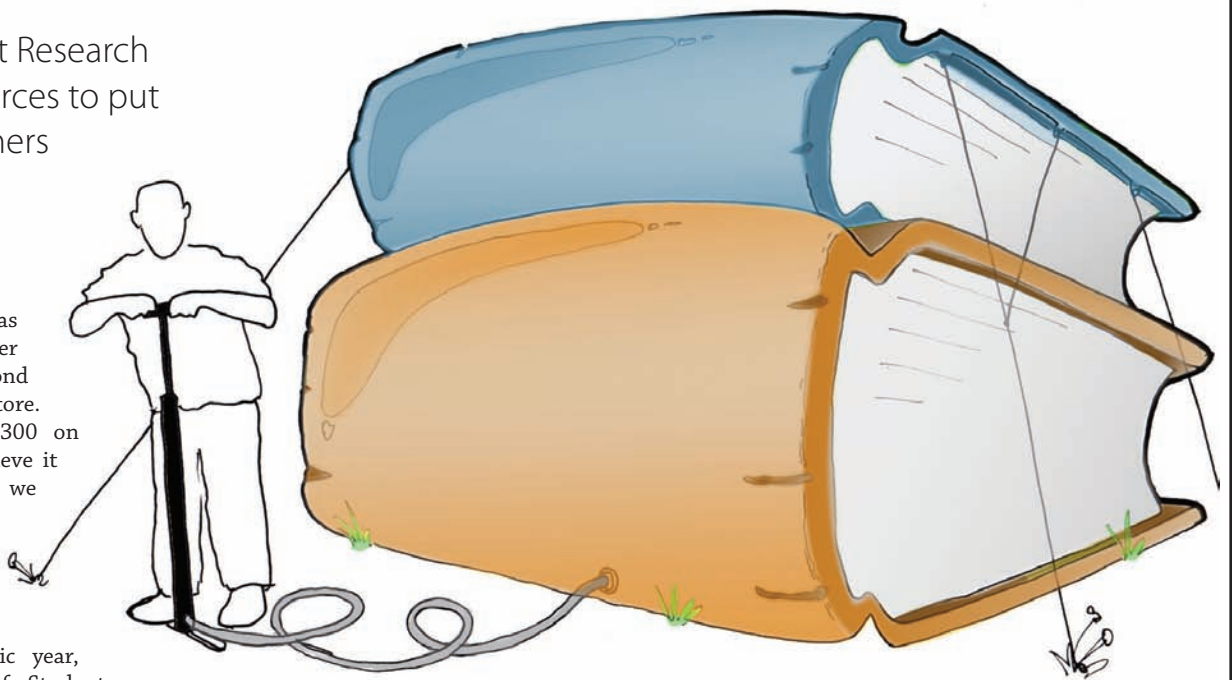


ILLUSTRATION BY | SCOTT TSUKAMAKI

Virginia Senator-elect's small lead holds

MICHAEL D. SHEAR AND LISA REIN
THE WASHINGTON POST

RICHMOND, Va. — Virginia's Democratic Senate candidate, James Webb, claimed the title of senator-elect Wednesday and began organizing his congressional staff even as Republican incumbent George Allen dispatched teams of lawyers and operatives across Virginia in search of the approximately 7,300 votes he would need to win.

With control of the U.S. Senate hanging in the balance, Allen did not appear ready to relinquish his claim to an office he once saw as a springboard to the White House. Webb continued to lead with virtually all of Virginia's 2.3 million ballots counted by Wednesday evening, but Allen's team clung to the hope that glitches or math errors might uncover new GOP votes.

"Let the process play itself out in a dignified manner," said Ed Gillespie, a former national Republican Party chairman, speaking for the Allen campaign in front of the Virginia party headquarters. "The votes need to be accurately counted. Only at the end of that process is a

winner declared."

But Gillespie declared Allen to be "realistic," and other Republicans who were closely involved in a potential recount said privately that they doubted Allen could overcome Webb's lead, which stood at 13 times as large as George W. Bush's lead over Al Gore in Florida in 2000.

"I don't see the votes there," said one Washington Republican who has been advising Allen and spoke on condition of anonymity because he didn't want to undermine the senator's message. "It's like the old saying: 'If you're not the lead dog, the view doesn't change.'"

At Webb headquarters in Arlington, Va., sleepy volunteers answered constantly ringing phones with a cheery new greeting: "Hello, Senator-elect Webb's office."

Still, teams of Democratic and Republican lawyers and volunteers traveled across Virginia to monitor the statewide process called a canvass, in which the preliminary tallies from Tuesday night are confirmed or adjusted over the next several days.

Jean Jensen, secretary of the State Board

SENATE

Party	Seats	Gain/Loss
Republicans	49	-5
Democrats	51	+6

HOUSE

Party	Seats	Gain/Loss
Republicans	196	-28
Democrats	229	29
Independent	0	-1
Undecided	10	

of Elections, said the local boards would mail the final results to her by 5 p.m. Monday. There is not likely to be much significant movement in the vote totals until then, if at all. Jensen must officially certify the results by Nov. 27.

SEE MORE ELECTION COVERAGE ON PAGE 8

TODAY »

"There is nothing easy about becoming a great team, but our team's hanging in there."

— Jim McLaughlin, coach

SPORTS » page 16



Huskies ready to kick off season in Basketball Traveller's Classic

SPORTS » page 16

A new Husky Promise and the battle over trans-fats

OPINION »
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50 / 40
Chance of Rain

class days left

19

TURING » Pan-lingual image search allows user to search in more than 100 available languages

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the current web that would allow computers to read and extract data from web content in order to make searches more simple and powerful.

Jonathan Pool, a former UW political science professor and real estate entrepreneur, said he founded the Utilika Foundation and funded the Turing Center because he was interested in creating a universe where one person could interact with any other person and where all people could efficiently communicate with machines.

Traditional approaches to human-machine communications have either tried to make machines figure out what people mean or make humans express their meaning in a way that machines can understand, Pool said. What's different about the Turing Center, he said, is its combination of both approaches.

"We know people can adapt to machines and we know machines can sometimes understand people. We try to study what both people and machines can do and find the possibilities," Pool said. "I think the problem of enabling

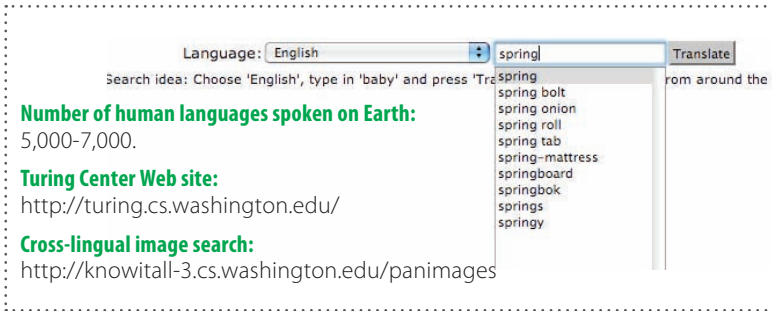
universal interactivity is extremely difficult. If you want to have a chance of solving it, you have to use all the resources you can find."

Though the center hasn't developed artificially intelligent computers or universal translators yet, it is already making applications that help users navigate language barriers on the Internet.

One of the newest applications developed by the Turing Center is a pan-lingual image search. Worldwide, image search is the second most-used type of search engine, said professor of computer science and Turing Center Director Oren Etzioni.

Most images on the web are tagged in English or French, so a person searching for a picture of a horse in, say, Mongolian or Slovenian might have much fewer search results than a native English speaker would.

The pan-lingual image search allows the user to type a search query in his native language, choosing from over 100 available languages. The application then translates the query into all of the other languages. Users



choose the translation they want, and the application then feeds the translated word into a Google image search.

"We found that we could get 38 times as many search results if we first typed the results into our pan-lingual image search," Etzioni said.

The search also allows users to clarify the ambiguity inherent in language, which can be a problem in the traditional Google image search.

"For instance, if you were going use Google to look for a spring — the bouncy kind — you can't just type in 'spring' because you'd get the season," said Kobi Reiter, an undergraduate

computer science major and developer of the application.

The cross-lingual image search solves this problem by allowing users to select from a list of multiple definitions and find the definition closest to their original intent, Reiter said.

By translating into other languages, users can also avoid the situation where a word in their language has a totally different meaning in a more widely used language.

"The word for 'teeth' in Hungarian is 'fog.' If you speak Hungarian and you're looking for a picture of teeth [in Google image search], you're never going to find it," Etzioni said.

Reiter said he imagined the search would be helpful for people whose languages don't have much Internet content. He also envisioned the tool being used for cross-cultural learning. For instance, if a person wanted to see pictures of food from around the world, he or she could type the word food into the search and find pictures of hamburgers, pad Thai or piroghis, depending on what language he clicked on.

"It's like a Google search on steroids," Reiter said.

The cross-lingual image search is still a long way from a truly intelligent artificial agent. A truly smart machine is the ideal, but may not be possible, he said.

"The Utilika Foundation has a very noble, grand goal, though how close to it we're going to get, I'm not sure," Reiter said. "But in terms of a machine being able to understand us in useful ways, we're making a lot of progress."

Reporter Tia Ghose: scitech@thedaily.washington.edu

LSAT » 'There really shouldn't be any special preparation necessary'

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Despite the changes, Ben Baron, vice president of graduate programs at Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions, urged students not to be "overly apprehensive" about the new format and said the best thing for students to do is "familiarize themselves as much as possible with the new test."

Margolis reiterated this point.

"There really shouldn't be any special preparation necessary" and traditional study methods should be sufficient grounding, she said.

However, Peg Cheng, UW academic counselor and pre-law advisor, said there are some things that students cannot prepare for.

"I think it's difficult to get better at reading comprehension through

taking a prep course," she said. "It's a skill that students should have developed throughout their school years."

Kaplan representatives are advising students to take either the December 2007 or February 2008 test simply because study material for the new format is not yet available.

In past years, students have used a number of study schemes to prepare for the exam, ranging from commercial preparatory courses to regimes they have designed themselves.

Seattle University law student John Laney tackled the reading comprehension section by reading one paperback book a day for a

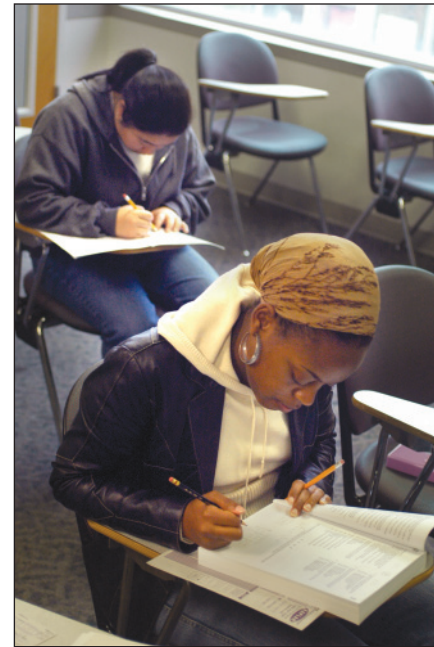
couple of months.

"I figured that my reading comprehension is generally good, but if I could read quicker, I could go back and read the passage again if I needed to in order to answer the question," he said.

The LSAC plans to release more information and preparation material for the comparative reading section by mid-February.

Both the Office of Undergraduate Advising and the Law School Admissions Office will have more information about the new test in the coming months.

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Further information on the new LSAT can be found at:

www.kaptest.com/law
www.lsac.org

ZOFIA GIL | THE DAILY
Lakesha Lee (front) and Dorothy Kim, who plan to take the LSAT in February, work on a diagnostic test as part of an LSAT preparation class at the Kaplan center.



"We believe in early promotions. So, we're starting you off as VP of Morning Coffee Procurement."

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