

# CGU president outlines issues for health care reform

**C**laremont Graduate University President Deborah Freund made a rare appearance at Keck Graduate Institute last Wednesday to give students a crash course in the economics of health care reform.

The health economist spoke on possible ramifications of the health care reform and how they will affect patients, medical professionals and U.S. citizens at large in the future.

"Health care consumes a large fraction of the gross domestic product (GDP), that is what we produce in this country," Ms. Freund explained regarding the current state of health care in the United States. "The money that we spend in health is higher than everybody else by a lot...One of the important things to realize is that these expenditures are in fact growing faster than any other portion of the GDP in the economy and growing faster than everybody's wages."

Ms. Freund's lecture also addressed that the United States is the only developed (industrialized) country in the world without universal health care and that 55 million (17.3 percent) of Americans are currently without any type of health coverage. She spent time highlighting the national health care systems of the United Kingdom and Canada.

The CGU president said the U.S. health care reform contains several mandates including mandated health coverage, improving the quality of health care, reducing costs and preventive care. Also included in every package from 2011, insurance companies not drop clients with illnesses and government regulation of administrative costs. Yet, according to Ms. Freund there are other considerations to recognize.

"The problem with all of this is that the program that was legislated didn't do anything to address the rate of growth in health care costs," Ms. Freund said. "Second, only 50 percent or fewer in this country get the right care at the right time. And so, in order to improve quality and reduce costs, the center for Medicaid and Medicare that run those 2 programs are going to test reforms that reward doctors and hospitals that are delivering quality rather than quantity."

Ms. Freund's talk was not designed to sway students toward a particular political view, but to generate interest with students on the topic. KGI professor Ian Phillips wanted his students within the Postbaccalaureate Premedical Certificate (PPC) Program to be aware of the current state of health care reform. The one-year program is designed to help students



**COURIER photos/Steven Felschundneff**  
Claremont Graduate University President Deborah Freund begins her speech on health care reform last week at Keck Graduate Institute. Most of the students attending the lecture were planning on careers in medicine.

become more competitive when applying for medical school.

"I had a group of students doing a project on health economics and I asked Debbie [Freund] if she knew anybody who would could come talk to us. She then told me that she would do it," Mr. Phillips said. "I made the invitation because I found out that I had students within the PPC program who didn't know anything about the health care reform. This is a very hot topic."

PPC student Erin White had many questions in response to the lecture. Yet she believes the talk was also a good way to spark discussion among students.

"I definitely left with more questions than I had before, but that is kind of a good thing," Ms. White said. "I wish that it could have been longer. But this gave me a good foundation and allows me to build up my vocabulary in regards to health care. This is an important topic for me since I want to go to medical school and it is also important to me personally because I have a brother who has cystic fibrosis who can't buy health care."

Fellow KGI student Laura Wilson agrees with Ms. White about the impact health care reform will have on their future careers.

"This was a great introduction to health care reform. There is no right answer—she [Freund] was just putting this out there and leaving her opinion out of it," Ms. Wilson said. "I want to go into the medical field and I wonder how all of this is going to affect me. I plan on going to medical school but I also want to work in the industry so I can make a difference."

## A dramatic reading of Dickens' A Christmas Carol


Ron Evans will reprise his dramatic reading of a perennial favorite, Charles Dickens' **A Christmas Carol** in Decker Hall at Pilgrim Place on Saturday, December 17th at 7 p.m.

One of the most anticipated of his many "oral tradition" presentations, Mr. Evans will again speak all 28 voices of the colorful Dickensian characters from the growing curmudgeon, Ebenezer Scrooge, to the range of children and adults Scrooge encounters throughout his fabled Christmas Eve of frights and fancies. It's a story everyone knows, but will again be brought to life in the timeless tradition of "reading aloud."

Following his reading, all are invited to share seasonal refreshments, including cups of "smoking bishop" holiday punch. It is the same refreshment the reformed Scrooge offers his office clerk, Bob Cratchet, at the happy end of the story. This famous 19th century treat was a prized potion served only on very special occasions in Victorian England. The Pilgrims have the recipe and will share this rare delight, in ample measure, at a reception following the reading in the Napier Common.

Residents Donna Danielson and Mary Russell are conspiring to provide Victorian costumed carolers who will add even more gaiety and merriment to this special Christmas program.


As always, visitors are welcome to enjoy this treat of Dickens' seasonal story, song and holiday fun.



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