

OVERDRAFT



THE DAILY CAMPUS

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Documentary screening sparks discussion

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By Jackie Wattles

With a presidential race in heat, a discussion panel and documentary screening at the Student Union last night sparked a relevant conversation about the \$15.8 trillion and climbing national debt the president will face.

The documentary, “Overdraft,” was funded by Travelers Institute, the public policy division and think tank of The Travelers Companies, Inc., which is the largest insurance company in the U.S. Joan Woodward, the president of the Travelers Institute, said the company created the documentary as a means to raise awareness of the severity and effects of the national debt.

“It’s in everybody’s best interest to have a roaring economy,” Woodward said. “[The deficit] is the largest economic risk we saw. We wanted to create something informative, educational and non-partisan.”

The documentary interviews prominent politicians from both ends of the spectrum, from former President Bill Clinton, to Mitch Daniels, the Republican governor of Indiana. Journalists and CEOs also offer their perspectives on how the debt was incurred, as well as what can be done about it.

The screening was a part of a 15-stop symposium tour at colleges and universities across the country, which began last week at the University of Pennsylvania. Woodward said the company wanted to raise awareness among students because it is the younger demographic that will be the most affected and, with baby-boomers retiring, will have the pressure of finding a solution.

Three UConn professors, Eduardo Canedo of the history department, Linda Klein of the department of finance and Richard Langlois of the department of economics, joined Woodward on a discussion panel following the film.

Though the panelists agreed decreasing the deficit will come from a combination of cutting spending, reforming tax policies and stimulating growth, they emphasized these measures are much easier said than done. In today’s increasingly contentious political environment, collective decisions and proper analyses of the problem are becoming harder to come by.

Taylor Falk, an undeclared sophomore, said he attended the event to learn more about an issue that continuously arises as a point of contention between candidate Romney and President Obama.

“With the upcoming election, I think it’s important to stay economically informed from an unbiased perspective,” Falk said.

David Ritter, a fifth-year classics and philosophy major, agreed.

“I think it’s potentially the greatest challenge this country is facing,” Ritter said. “And the problems are so complex that it’s difficult for the public to be educated on what the real options are. It’s also one of our biggest political challenges, and it seems we’re incapable of solving it.”

The documentary will also be distributed by WTVI-TV to public television stations across the country over the next two years and is available to watch in full on YouTube. Throughout the symposium tour, film viewers are encouraged to tweet about their responses to the film using the “#overdraft” tag.

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