

# The business of education is business

**CLAYTON'S CORNER**  
by Michael Oille Clayton

I wonder where a university gets its true strength? When I say "true strength" I mean to say its ability to operate. Cynically, I could say that the benefaction of the federal government is the sole catalyst for the ongoing process of higher education in America; that the act of socialism called federal aid is the wind beneath the wings of every college campus in the heartland.

But what about the time when the federal government didn't fund individual students prior to the days of Horatio Alger and the advent of compulsory education? (There isn't much guess work here).

Fortunately, I am alive today and do not have to answer that question. I don't even have to think about that horror.

Still, the question lingers: Where does a university get its true strength? Is it the administration? The faculty, professors, graduate assistants and academicians? The students, and student-athletes? Where?

Certainly a combination of all of the aforementioned groups would be the logical answer. It is probably the only answer.

But taken from another point of view one would have to wonder just where would a university get its true strength if the university system was subject to the problems that today's version of compulsory (public) education must face.

The difference between a good education and a bad education is how much one is willing or able to pay, how receptive a student's mind is to information loading, and the ability of an instructor(s) to disseminate correctly what has been pre-

scribed as required.

Imagine if a student were faced with the tremendous burden of financing his or her education from kindergarten on? (We'd have a land full of child laborers, and a lot of fist fights.) Only a small few could attend, for sure, and the instructors could make outrageous income demands. Fortunately, this isn't so.

We, as children, didn't (don't) have to worry about spending our days meant for frolicking in a state of stress and turmoil. And if our parents want us to get a good 'ole compulsory (public) education, they don't have to either.

Paying for an education seems as crass as paying for manners or the right to be born, but not paying for it is even worse. The higher one moves up the educational ladder the more he or she WILL pay for their educational enlightenment. Plain and simple, no questions asked.

This paying for the betterment (marketability) of self, or, cynically speaking, the prostitution of intellect, is the best way to insure a really damn good way to not only receive, but to administer reason and rationality.

The promise of rewards called status, tenure and, of course, money, are certainly worth either sinking oneself into debt or studying one's ass off to get an academic scholarship.

This putting of a price tag on education seems to be done backwards. Though it is certainly harder to teach a third grader than it is to teach a college senior, but still the price tag balloons. That this is anyone's fault I dare not venture to say, as I am sure that a doctorate candidate would not want to see his or her instructor fly off to the newly fertile pastures of kindergarten, and

thereby leaving him or her in the hands of a baby-sitter. As well, I am sure that a college professor considers himself or herself worth the money for the expertise they've (also) paid for.

It sometimes seems that college exists not to give credentials as much as to be in the business of business. It seems unfair to say that too, but try out the philosophy of "goodwill on earth and peace to all men" at the cashier's office and you'll turn gray and wrinkled waiting for your name to appear on any instructor's roll.

In our nation's bastions of higher enlightenment tenure, let alone employment, seem to be better reasons to exist in said institution rather than the dissemination of knowledge. For if professors and academicians were truly concerned with education for the sake of education there wouldn't be the "sender-receiver" classes so prevalent today, but, instead, "stimulus-feedback" classes.

What is learned is the very machine-like spewing and spitting out of bland information learned predicated on deadlines, most of which is undertaken the night or so before a test—sort of like sugar without sweetness—becoming dry powder to the mouth, instead of delight to the taste buds.

Knowing this, how does the learning of many of the general education requirements make a person whole? And this is not to pick on the general education area, as it does serve to create spongy resourcefulness for those who do manage to hold on to a shred of what they've been force fed.

The thinking here is that what good does taking a test, or even finishing a class do, when nothing

is learned, but instead, all so meaninglessly memorized in the name of a short-term objective?

The thought of college as business garners steam when the notion is suggested that general education requirements serve as building blocks in regards to memory enhancement, to information gathering, as indoctrinations to the structural process of upper-division courses when a person has spent the first seventeen or eighteen years of his or her life learning what the freshmen and sophomore years promise to do in two. Is this really fair? I think not!

What we have is a wasting of time and, for certain, a wasting of money. (It certainly wouldn't do the lending institutions that pass out Guaranteed Student Loans any good to lose a year or two of borrowing prospects; it is also a disservice to the resourceful adaptability of the human brain.) And, as we've been told by fundraisers, *a mind is a terrible thing to waste!*

The point here is not to lay blame, it is just that there should be a reassessment of the nature of education in America. There should be a reassessment of the ability of a child's capacity to encode what is reserved for college seniors.

Why? Well, why not? I mean, come on...ever since corporal punishment was banned from public education the kids have taken on a new awareness of the world around them, and have begun to act like college freshmen and sophomores, at least. They do smoke, drink and have sex with as much regularity as do their "college elders."

Facing the facts would suggest that there is no other course but the

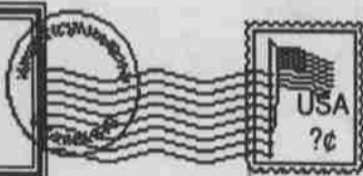
redefining of the way socialization and maturation play a part in the development of a person's life when meatier, more worthy concepts and subjects (other than "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles") are offered to said person's early life exposure. The exclusion of reality from a child's life with such hokey delusions as a Santa Claus, an Easter Bunny, and a Tooth Fairy have done little else than set a child up for hope in things never to be seen. It is a violation of reality. The point is missed. (There is very little Christ in Christmas.)

Not only that, but said practices are out-grown, sooner or later, though, apparently, sometimes never, but certainly once discovered as hoax leave a bitter taste in a person's life because of the foolery. The desire to hope and believe in things that can never possibly come true is not healthy.

And don't construe this argument as "Scroogery." A holiday such as Thanksgiving or Labor Day is tangible, real, and believable...so should the tempering of a child's mind.)

In conclusion (i.e., with all of that said), the problem with compulsory (public) education is that it does not generate profit, like colleges. It is a "buggering" to the federal budget. The only profit to the current system of education everywhere is the socially profitable, though abstract, exposure of those ignorant to another/newer outlook and thereby the creation of a reasoning, rational undergeneration awaiting maturation and assimilation—but, unfortunately, that isn't enough to make one single buck.

## Letter to the Editor



### Decision to close road called asinine

The impeding of the road from Harmon to University Road is asinine, insane, ludicrous, ridiculous and impudent. No matter how you say it, it boils down to being plain ole' STUPID!

My greatest problem with the recent barricade is the inconvenience that it has produced. I am a university staff employee, as well as a full time student who is involved in various activities on campus. As such, I am constantly traveling back and forth (by foot and by car) to all areas of the campus. As a consequence, I utilized the now-

blocked roadway TREMENDOUSLY!

It is obvious to see what an inconvenience this has caused me. I'm sure I am not the only person who is affected to this degree.

My second and subsequent problem is with the rationale behind the closing of the road. A recent article in the "Yellin' Rebel" (April 17 issue) stated that "a portion of Gym Road and University Road on the university campus will be closed for safety reasons"; in essence to limit the potential for accidents involving pedestrians.

On April 16, I called the University Department of Public Safety in an attempt to obtain actual statistics regarding the number of traffic accidents involving pedestrians and autos: Not to my surprise, the young man confirmed that there had been NO accidents involving pedestrians on campus within the last five years. Furthermore, of the only two accidents in the area (involving pedestrians) one was on Maryland Parkway and one on Tropicana Ave. Thus, accidents on campus are not a way of life or fact, but meager potentiality. A potential that hasn't grown in at least five years or more.

In addition, the Yell article stated: "This [barrier] will effectively cut off through traffic on campus," the campus police chief said, explaining that many vehicles that are in no way associated with UNLV have been driving through

university grounds..."

What, then, is the purpose for blocking off the road? Is it to punish or harass the students (the main reason we're all here!) for someone else's indiscretion - someone that "is in no way associated with UNLV"?

If these "vehicles" are such a problem, what are the University Police for? Isn't it their job to thwart specific violators such as this, as opposed to imposing these measures (barricades) as a catch-all for potential violators? To what extent is the University responsible for potential accidents? I could list

hundreds of potential accidents that can occur around campus daily!!

My whole point for writing this is to say that the blocking of the road from Harmon to University Road is stupid. It is a problem that will only get bigger. Something needs to be done about it by those same bureaucrats who started this problem. Something that will work for the student - not against them. After all, we're paying for it.

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**Editor's Note:** The Arts & Entertainment section (in the April 17 issue) was not supervised by Lori Gallinger.