

Registration frustration diet plan

Clandestine weight loss plan forced on students

by Joseph J Wheeler

It's after the holidays. We're fat. We need exercise. Thank goodness our university officials, in their collected wisdom, have made sure we'll get it. Their idea is to put all students through a guaranteed calorie burner to help begin the new semester on the right foot.

It's called registration.

The process by which we sign up and pay for classes has been secretly designed to provide crucial fat-burning moments. With Christmas coming on the heels of Thanksgiving, and a dash of New Year's indulgence thrown in, it's no wonder that most Americans are overweight. The university is doing its part in the fight against flab.

Professor O. Beese has broken with longstanding university policy and admitted what many had suspected for some time.

"The entire registration process is a lie," he said. "The thing is rigged, it's fixed, it's a sorry sham geared to helping students lose weight."

How so?

The professor glanced around

his tiny office, which he shares with 14 others on alternating leap years, and explained how the university has been forcing a weight loss plan on the student body (student's bodies, perhaps?) through the registration process.

"It's simple. Everything the student is forced to do to register for a class has been calculated to burn a certain number of calories. Take pre-registration, for instance," he held up a TOUCH registration instruction sheet.

"Just reading this mess burns 65 calories. Waiting on hold for as long as two hours burns 543 calories. Dialing in your class numbers not only burns calories but provides a critical work-out for the fingers."

Professor Beese hushed, thinking he'd heard someone outside the door. It turned out to be a student seeking advice on his educational requirements. The professor followed normal procedure and ignored him.

I asked Professor Beese if he was nervous about "coming out." He laughed softly.

"Not really. There's nothing they can do to me, except deny my tenure, ruin my reputation,

destroy my career, and drive me to an early grave. Other than that, I feel perfectly secure talking to you."

I wanted to know how registration made a difference in weight loss. A few calories here or there didn't seem like a good reason to make students endure the

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twice-a-year ritual. The professor pulled out a thick file folder and opened it.

"It's not just one or two calories; it's a concentrated plan designed to knock off pounds and inches. Look at this!" He poured over sheets and diagrams, studies performed on students, and old issues of "Interim."

"Standing in hellishly long lines: 1,500 calories. Being told a class is full: 2,378 calories. Running from department to depart-

ment trying to get into an open class: 4,015 calories! Pulling your hair out by the handful: 5,032 calories! It's all here, in black and white. Registration is a farce with no reason for being except to promote the health of students."

Promote student health? By making us pull our hair out?

The professor shrugged. "That's worth over 5,000 calories and it's a great cardiovascular workout as well."

But why make students go through all that? Wouldn't it be easier just to simplify registration and have students get their exercise somewhere else?

"This way," he said, "the university can take its time registering people. The entire thing should take no more than a day, but with the Registration Frustration Diet Plan, it sometimes takes as long as a week."

I left the professor's tiny office, stunned at what he had revealed. We walked together for a bit, although I was still confused about the university's perception that students needed a forced fat-burner plan.

He tried to explain it one last time. "Registration is only like

negotiating a minefield because students, after the holidays, need to work off a mess of calories picked up during all those fancy dinners. That's it. The university feels it's doing students a service by making their lives hell during registration."

So, that's it, the Registration Frustration Diet Plan. Everything fell into place; all the problems I, and thousands of others, have suffered through -- all because we eat too much over the holidays, and the cold weather means no exercise.

I suppose the university feels it's doing some good with its covert calorie counting, but there's one thing I still don't understand. It's a fact that most people gain between five and eight pounds over the holidays. Perhaps the Registration Frustration Diet Plan is needed...

But what's their rationale for Fall?

Wheeler is opinion page editor of The Yellin' Rebel and claims to have lost four pounds during registration.

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