

President Clinton speaks out on student aid

Dear Student,

This is a busy time for you. But while you are choosing classes and making the decisions that will help you build a good life for yourself, the Congressional majority is working to make drastic cuts in education—in your student loans, in national service, and even in your scholarships. And the cuts will jeopardize the future you and your generation are working toward.

I want you to know that I oppose these cuts. I will do everything in my power to fight them and to see to it that the dream of higher education remains real for all Americans. I will do this not only by defending the opportunities of those of you who are already in college, but by opening the doors further to make sure that even greater numbers of deserving Americans have the chance to stand where you stand today.

For the first time in a long time, leaders from both parties are resolved that we must balance the federal budget. From the day I took office, I've been committed to this goal—to getting rid of the budget deficit that quadrupled our national debt in the 12 years before I came to Washington. So far, we have made great progress. In three years, we have cut the deficit nearly in half, from \$290 billion to \$160 billion.

Now we are ready to eliminate the deficit entirely. On this, the Congressional majority and I see eye to eye.

But just *how* we get rid of the deficit is another matter. The majority in Congress wants to balance the budget in seven years, and do it while giving an unnecessarily large tax cut. But in order to do these things, the Congress majority would make enormous cuts in education.

My balanced budget plan would take more years than Congress' to eliminate the deficit, but that's a small price to pay to keep your scholarship, your student loans, and national service safe and well. It would also preserve our ability

Guest
Column
PRESIDENT
BILL
CLINTON

to protect the environment and the integrity of Medicare for our older citizens. Balancing the budget is about more than numbers. It's about our values and our future. Education has always been the currency of the American Dream. When I was your age, it was assumed—based on our long history—that each generation would have a better life than the previous one. More than anything else, a good education is the way we pass this version on to those who come after us.

The facts speak for themselves. Earnings for those with no post-secondary education have fallen substantially in the last 15 years. The only people for whom earnings have increased steadily are people exactly like you—those Americans with more education. Every year of higher education increases your earnings by six to 12 percent. Those years also mean a stronger overall economy and richer lives for those who have them.

Balancing the budget will be good for our economy and your future if it's done right. But simply balancing the budget won't do us much good in the long term if your generation does not have the education it needs to meet the challenges of the next century.

Just think over what the congressional majority's plan, if it went through, would do to you, your classmates, and any of the one out of two college students who receives federal aid. It would:

—Raise the cost of student loans by \$10 billion over seven years by charging you interest on your loan while you are in school. This would increase the cost of a college education by as much as \$3,100 for undergraduates and \$9,400 for graduate students.

—Deny up to 360,000 low-income students desperately needed Pell Grants in 1996.

—Shut down Americorps, our national service initiative, which gives thousands of young people the chance to earn and save money for college while serving their coun-

try to protect the environment and the integrity of Medicare for our older citizens.

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By contrast, my balanced budget plan builds on the national consensus that we must help people help themselves, through the power of education. It eliminates *both* of our deficits: our budget deficit and our education deficit. My plan cuts wasteful spending by more than \$1 trillion, but it also increases investments in education by \$40 billion over the next seven years.

Think over how my balanced budget plan would help guarantee your future and all the hard work you're about to put into it. It will:

—Increase funding for Pell Grants by \$3.4 billion. Almost one million more students would benefit from the scholarships. And we would raise the top award to \$3,128 by the year 2002.

—Expand Americorps to let even more young Americans serve their communities and go to college.

—Protect our direct-lending program, which makes student loans more affordable, with more repayment options,

and saves taxpayers, parents, and students billions of dollars.

I just returned from Pearl Harbor, where I took part in ceremonies marking the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. In the late 1940s, when the veterans we honored left their loved ones to go off and serve their country, they were the age most of you are now.

When they came home, the country recognized their service and their potential, and it responded with the G.I. Bill, which guaranteed a college education to every returning veteran. Those who served weren't given a handout, and they didn't want one. They were given the opportunity they needed to take responsibility for their lives.

Your generation has its own battles to wage. You face the choice of doing something right and difficult—or something easy and wrong.

In taking responsibility of educating yourselves, you have chosen the right and difficult path. You did the work

you had to do to get into college. You may be working now to pay your way, and your family may have worked long hours and made great sacrifices to help you get where you are today.

You deserve the nation's support. And your future success will likely repay our common investment. I do not accept the arguments of those who condemn irresponsibility in young Americans and then seek to deny the nation's helping hand to the millions of you who are doing the right things.

I hope you'll support my efforts to protect education and balance the budget. The fight for education is the fight for your future. In my life—and in the lives of countless Americans—education has meant the difference between the impossible and the possible. It should be true in your lives, too. With your help, we'll keep it that way.

—Bill Clinton is
the 42nd president
of the United States.

Letters to the Editor

To the editor:

After reading Kate Obenshain Griffin's column (*The Rebel Yell*, Sept. 19, 1995), "Politically correct curriculum: Will it get you a job?" I was compelled to ask myself this question: I would be a happily employed geologist with a Bachelor's degree if I had only taken Economics 101 instead of Psychology of Women? Certainly the only reasonable answer is no, of course not, many positions in the sciences require advanced degrees. But I interpret the column to report a casual relationship between the ratio of what seem to be "workforce-related" courses to "fad" courses and the unemployment rate of college graduates. I believe this is an invalid and lamentable line of reasoning.

To blame a school's curriculum for the problems of its graduates is reflective of what I think is the wrong way to view education: passive and self-centered. So many people come to school of the mindset, "I'm going to sit back now, and you're going to teach me, and then I'm going to get a great job and a nice car to go with it, and if I don't get

that great job and that nice car, then it's your fault." Ask yourself: "Would I hire this person?"

And Women's Studies is a "fad" course? I disagree. If you examine the workforce and the scientific community, here in 1995, you'll see women working twice as hard for half the recognition. Curricula and courses of this nature serve to offer viewpoints that have traditionally been neglected by academia and the world at large for too long.

So "finding a good job" is the number one reason most people attend college? I submit that they are in the wrong place. The university should be the training ground for scientists, engineers, philosophers, and practitioners of medical and psychological arts. You want a job? Head on over to the Community College—it's cheaper and you get to work in two years. The Las Vegas Gaming and Technical School boasts of its ability to provide lifetime job placement. There are other numerous renowned technical and vocational schools in the Southwest which offer the kinds of job placement programs that the university does not. Of course the students pay for those ser-

vices—at the university all you're paying for is the education. I suspect my argument may not fully apply to UNLV's Hotel School, as I'm not familiar with its programs.

As a graduate student, I probably won't again have the opportunity to study such things as *The Lesbian Literary Tradition* or *Search for Extraterrestrial Life* in a classroom setting. But as an undergraduate, the classes were available. And why should all my classes be Economics, or Physics, or whatever? The opportunity exists in the university to indulge personal interests that may be outside of one's chosen curriculum. The whole point of the university-level liberal education is to take advantage of the opportunity to engage in critical thought on a wider range of subjects than offered at alternative institutions. What you get out of that opportunity is up to you. If you don't like that, then cope, or find a program that you like better. No one is forcing the students through these doors.

Anthony D. Feig
Graduate Assistant,
Geosciences

Dear Mr. Caliguire,

You're doing it wrong! I opened last Thursday's *Rebel Yell*, and what do I see? A well written, witty, intelligent opinion piece, that's what! You do realize that you have broken the rule which states that opinion columnists for *The Rebel Yell* must be as stupid as stumps and semi-literate, right?

What are you thinking man? Don't you realize that if you keep producing articles with true journalistic merit, people might actually take the student newspaper seriously?

Heresy! Such quality has never before been permitted. You're rocking the boat.

But seriously, when those who would leech the world of quality start paying you a visit, hang tough and stick to your views. This university needs a reality sandwich, so keep making them.

By the way, "Hero and Zero" of the week was dead on the money. Bravo!

Katherine Keller
Senior, English