

'Cheating During College'; an Article For Student Consideration and Thought

(Editor's Note: For new students and old it is well to be aware that cheating does exist at this University and universities throughout the nation. William Graham Cole, chairman of the department of religion and dean of freshmen at Williams College, wrote this article for the May 14, 1960, issue of The Nation. We reprint it in part here for your serious consideration.)

By WILLIAM GRAHAM COLE

The groves of Academe across the country are currently being tossed about by a tempest of impressive force. The trouble began with the revelation that the television quiz shows were rigged; the integrity of one celebrated egghead was the first casualty of a storm which has grown steadily to virtual hurricane proportions.

Today the evidence is widespread that cheating goes on in colleges and universities in all parts of the nation. And it isn't only routine tests and examinations that are involved; ingenious entrepreneurs are doing a lively business ghost-writing term papers and even Ph.D. theses. We have long been accustomed to the fact that political figures read speeches written by others, but there is a general conviction that a man's sheepskin credentials should be his own.

The diploma certifying one's academic achievement, whether as a Bachelor of Arts or as a Doctor of Philosophy, has been traditionally regarded as a prize won by blood, sweat and midnight oil. If the cost can now be translated into ingeniously designed crib-notes, skillfully furtive peeks, or even cold cash, then, indeed, the question may be raised: what is higher education worth?

The situation demands some caution, however, for no one can be certain how recent is the phenomenon of academic dishonesty, nor how much more prevalent it is today than in previous eras. Clearly there is more cheating today, but equally clearly there are more schools, more students and more tests. The question is one of proportion. In any case, little is gained by a rush to the wailing wall, however emotionally purging that may be.

What is called for rather is a sober attempt to analyze the sources of the problem and to discover some viable solutions.

First of the factors that require a long, long look is the heavy emphasis placed throughout American education on grades. Admission to college and university today requires, more than ever before, a record liberally sprinkled with As and Bs. The graduate schools, becoming increasingly selective, also place a high premium on the marks received in college.

This means that as the student climbs the academic stairway, he finds at each successive level a sign reading "Reserved for those with good grades." Thus, if he is not content to abandon his ascent, he must produce his passport.

But why must he cheat? Why should he not earn his marks by hard work? Of course, the answer is that many do, perhaps even the majority. But there is evidently a sizable minority who take the easier, less virtuous way, and when some do and get away with it, the incentive to hard work is perceptibly weakened. Besides, it is the final mark received in the course, not what one has learned, that is really important.

Why should it not be possible for American education to adopt the tutorial system so long effective in Britain, where the teacher works together with the student preparing for an examination which someone else will give? The examination is of the comprehensive type, virtually impervious to cheating. It is not a trap for the student to reveal how little he knows. It is rather an opportunity for him to show what he can do.

Mere rote mastery of facts will get him nowhere. He is asked to display his ability to reason, to relate, to react. It is the sort of examination which is fun for any student worthy of name. It would be perfectly possible to give such a test "open-book" fashion, allowing the examinees to bring into the room any materials they like, since the material would be of little use anyway.

This is the best way to deal with cheating—to make it impractical by making it undesirable to the student himself. At this point, it should be said in fairness to at least segments of American education that many teachers are regularly giving "open-book" exams, and almost invariably students find them a stimulating challenge.

But a change in grading system, in type of examination, in student-teacher relationship, is mere mechanical manipulation. More fundamental is the student's attitude toward education itself. American education, by and large, produces a maximum of passivity; students do not so much learn anything as

they are taught something.

There is precious little correlation that is obvious to them between what is going on in the classroom and in the market place where they intend to spend the rest of their lives. We need far more independent study in our colleges and far more contact with the workaday world than we now have.

I am not suggesting vocationalism in any sense of that word. I do, however, mean to point strongly to the need for a continuous dialogue between the university and the world at large, a dialogue which now consists of two independent and deaf-eared monologues.

If students can be encouraged to pursue their own research out of sheer curiosity, for the mere joy of learning, and then be asked to relate what they are doing to the larger commonwealth of mankind, in which they share citizenship, then cheating on the campus will wither and die, because the waters which now keep it alive will have dried up.

Old Man . . .

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a good seat than to catch the big tuna.

It was the Kingston Trio of ball games but the old man thought only of how getting a good seat was like death in the afternoon.

He would get a good seat the next Saturday, though. He knew now how to do it. And he would even bring the little newspaper boy with him and they would both get good seats on the marker of the 50 yards.

He knew he would get a good seat because he had decided that while fraternities cannot be destroyed, they can always be pledged.

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Registration . . .

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standings were made on almost all the cards. Students should disregard this class standing number.

Both upper and lower class advisors will be available for consultation all day Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, and students are advised to plan a full year curriculum at this time.

SENIORS and graduate students who plan to receive degrees in June of 1961 should check shortly after registration at the Graduate Requirements Window in the Registrar's Office and fill out the formal application for degree.

Schell to speak over KGW-TV

Oregon student body president Steve Schell will be one of the student leaders who will discuss the "College for Oregon's Future" program on television October 1.

Schell will appear on the program with Dick Seideman, Oregon State student body president, and Dale Ward, Portland State president. Moderator of the program will be Justice Ted Goodwin of the State Supreme Court.

Schell will be in Portland Monday night to tape the program for broadcast over KGW-TV on October 1.



ONCE MORE UNTO THE BREACH, DEAR FRIENDS

Today, if I am a little misty, who can blame me? For today I begin my seventh year of writing columns for the makers of Marlboro Cigarettes.

Seven years! Can it be possible? It seems only yesterday I walked into the Marlboro offices, my knickers freshly pressed, my cowlick wetted down, my oilcloth pencil box clutched in my tiny hand. "Sirs," I said to the makers of Marlboro—as handsome an aggregation of men as you will find in a month of Sundays, as agreeable as the cigarettes they make—mild yet hearty, robust yet gentle, flip-top yet soft pack—"Sirs," I said to this assemblage of honest tobaccoists, "I have come to write a column for Marlboro Cigarettes in college newspapers across the length and breadth of this great free land of America."

We shook hands then—silently, not trusting ourselves to speak—and one of the makers whipped out a harmonica and we sang sea chanties and bobbed for apples and played "Run, Sheep, Run," and smoked good Marlboro Cigarettes until the campfire had turned to embers.

"What will you write about in your column?" asked one of the makers whose name is Trueblood Strongheart.



"About the burning issues that occupy the lively minds of college America," I replied. "About such vital questions as: Should the Student Council have the power to levy taxes? Should proctors be armed? Should coeds go out for football?"

"And will you say a kind word from time to time about Marlboro Cigarettes," asked one of the makers whose name is Honor Bright.

"Why, bless you, sirs," I replied, chuckling silverly, "there is no other kind of word except a *kind* word to say about Marlboro Cigarettes—the filter cigarette with the unfiltered taste—that happy combination of delicious tobacco and exclusive selectrate filter—that loyal companion in fair weather or foul—that joy of the purest ray serene."

There was another round of handshakes then and the makers squeezed my shoulders and I squeezed theirs and then we each squeezed our own. And then I hid me to my typewriter and began the first of seven years of columning for the makers of Marlboro Cigarettes.

And today as I find myself once more at my typewriter, once more ready to begin a new series of columns, perhaps it would be well to explain my writing methods. I use the term "writing methods" advisedly because I am, above all things a methodical writer. I do not wait for the muse; I work every single day of the year, Sundays and holidays included. I set myself a daily quota and I don't let anything prevent me from achieving it. My quota, to be sure, is not terribly difficult to attain (it is, in fact, one word per day) but the important thing is that I do it *every single day*. This may seem to you a grueling schedule but you must remember that some days are relatively easy—for example, the days-on which I write "the" or "a". On these days I can usually finish my work by noon and can devote the rest of the day to happy pursuits like bird-walking, monopoly, and smoking Marlboro Cigarettes.

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The makers of Marlboro are happy to bring you another year of Max Shulman's free-wheeling, uncensored column—and are also happy to bring Marlboro Cigarettes, and for non-filter smokers—mild, flavorful Philip Morris.