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# PERSPECTIVES

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## Conforming to COLLEGE



*Increasingly, the university system prepares students to labor but not to think*

**W**ho am I? What am I doing here? Where has all my money gone? Why am I wasting my time?

Any of us who have been hunched down in front of a computer screen at 3 a.m., alternately

OPINION



Kameron Cole

munching Ramen and No-Doz while trying to churn out 10 pages of feigned erudition is painfully familiar with this line of questioning. Stress, inadequate nutrition and lack of sleep

bring out the existentialist in us all.

Most of us shrug these concerns off and return to the issues that are most immediate: finals and term papers.

As little as 20 years ago, the university was viewed as a place to learn the critical thinking skills that enriched the experience of being human. The decision to go to college was based as much on the desire to expand your mind as on your bank account.

These days we are less idealistic. Tradition and the hope for intellectual enlightenment don't send us clamoring for a way into the ivory tower anymore. But the fear of being poor does.

Take an informal poll of college students and ask them why they've opted for higher education. Odds are that "so I can get a good job" will top the list of answers. Now ask them what they would be doing if they didn't have to worry about supporting themselves financially. Most people will come up with something more creative than preparing for a career that requires them to spend eight hours a day in a feed pen-like cubicle.

Society has roped us into a system. Like animals, we have been conditioned to view our lives in the most simplistic of terms, with each milestone serving as little more than a segue to the next cy-

cle. We go to school so we can get jobs. We work so we can make enough money to retire. We retire so we can have a little peace before we die. Unfortunately, the university is fast becoming a tool of this system.

A major part of this change can be attributed to the increasing influence of corporations in higher education. Indeed, there has been a concerted effort to combat the anti-business sentiment that has flourished on American campuses.

Colleges and universities all over the country, facing dwindling public funding, are forming alliances with big business. God knows the University of Oregon is no exception.

The motivations behind these couplings are insidious. By offering hefty contributions to universities, corporations are also attempting to curry favor with students. The goal here is to create an entire generation who will not only support the products of companies that promote an agenda of materialism and consumerism detrimental to both the environment and the human spirit, but who will also thank them for the privilege.

Whereas the academic institutions of the '60s and '70s were lambasted for not preparing students for "real life," '90s academia is doing the job a little too well.

As students, we live in a world where rolling out of bed and into a 9 a.m. lecture is a victory and finding an extra five bucks in a coat pocket is cause for major celebration. But we've been trained to believe that simple pleasures like this must eventually come to an end, and we must yoke ourselves to convention.

Our educational system has become preoccupied with teaching us how to attain an amorphous concept of success. But in a world where our education is being subsidized by the likes of Nike and Coke, how to think for yourself may be the most valuable lesson of all.

*Kameron Cole is a columnist for the Emerald. Her columns appear on alternate Wednesdays. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**Fight rape culture**

In light of your article concerning Danta Graham-Preston (ODE, Nov. 18), the charges against him and subsequent finding that he violated the conduct code, I wanted to take the opportunity to restate that there is a rape culture we live in and to encourage everyone, especially men, to work against that culture and work toward creating a rape-free environment.

As I walked around campus on Tuesday, it seemed that all I heard was talk about this article. While I don't want to discourage discussion, I would hope that everyone would refrain from questions about the survivors involved in these cases with regards to their motives, integrity or anything else. Surviving a sexual assault is traumatic as it is; I can't imagine why someone would subject themselves to any hearing process unless the incident had actually occurred.

Don't buy into the culture that

says it is okay to blame the women or question the validity of the women's stories. A hearing process has been followed through to the end, and the conduct code was found to be violated. Let us move forward from this time and use this case as an example of what is not okay and what we will not accept as students at this University, as individuals in this society.

**Robert Wasson**  
 ASUO multicultural advocate

**University unfair**

I am writing in regards to the front page story of the Emerald on the student who was expelled (ODE, Nov. 18). The story was extremely one-sided and the writer, Laura Cadiz, did not show Danta's side of the story at all. He has been judged by the University and now the Emerald without being given a chance to speak. Floyd Prozanski says he is not credible. He is one of the most intelligent and articulate people I know here at the University and

for anyone to say that his story is not credible must not be listening. I believe another article should be written to expound upon what Danta has to say. I would think the University would try to model their judicial system after the country we are in. We are in Eugene. It is 1997. We are not in Salem, Mass., during the witch trials. We shouldn't burn a student at the stake because of false accusations that are not supported by any evidence at all.

**Chris Fogarty**  
 Sociology/psychology

**Expulsion necessary**

I had mixed feelings after reading the article, "Student charged with sexual misconduct" (ODE, Nov. 18) on Tuesday's front page. Part of me was glad to know that Graham-Preston was appropriately punished after sexually assaulting two fellow students. Especially after the passing of the new sexual misconduct code, it would appear that the University

is finally taking a stand against date and acquaintance rape. However, I was incredibly disappointed when reading that Graham-Preston, even though being found guilty on two separate cases of unwanted sexual behavior, is currently enrolled in classes. I also felt misled because that important piece of information was buried within the rest of the article.

I think that it is incredibly courageous of the two survivors to take their cases through the Student Conduct Code. Too many times, victims of sexual assault are unwilling to go forward legally with their cases because of feelings of revictimization. The reasons why are all too clear in the Graham-Preston cases. I am appalled that even with the strength of Prozanski's statement, "I felt that [expulsion from school] was fair and just. ... It gained protection to the victim on campus and protects other individuals on campus," the perpetrator is currently able to attend

classes and access University facilities. With Graham-Preston walking around campus, how safe can the two survivors possibly feel? I can imagine that they hesitate before going anywhere on campus: the library, the EMU, even their own classes. The decision by the appeals board to allow him back on campus seems to ignore this completely. Now, even though the survivors have had the strength enough to go through the conduct code, they must face it all again, not only through the appeal process but also by just being on campus.

It is unfair of the University to create a charade of advocating for women's safety in cases of sexual violence. If the University wants to continue setting national trends with progressive policies like the new sexual misconduct code, they can no longer go forward with half-hearted attempts at justice.

**Rebecca Peatow**  
 ASUO Women's Center