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# PERSPECTIVES

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CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

## Let's turn college into corporate America

*If we want to prepare students for the real world, we should teach them a lesson about reality*

For some of us, the future is nearly here. It's called graduation, and it will force most of us into the real world.

Like jumping into a freezing lake in Norway after walking out of the Arizona desert (I'm sure

Disney will make it possible one day), graduation brings with it a certain shock. Accordingly, there is an increasing trend in universities to make college more like "reality" and less like academia.

I, for one, am all for this move. It's important for students to be educated about the brave new world that awaits them, rather than such useless concepts as literature or calculus.

Therefore, I propose that we run our classes more like busi-

nesses. It's high time professors gained the power of company presidents.

Of course, in order to be a successful business, you have to produce something. It didn't take me many Internet searches to find the solution — papers.

Everyone needs papers. As long as other schools continue to consider education their mission, there will be college and high school students who need something to turn in at the end of the period.

Running this operation successfully will require a few changes in the classroom environment. For starters, it's time we end this silly concept of educational breadth. Students who are trained to write papers on many topics are not productive students; we need to make sure each student hones only a few useful skills.

Additionally, it's time to consolidate our classes. Consider, for example, the vast range of classes that deal with feminist topics — we have classes on feminism and politics, feminism and literature, feminism and philosophy, feminism and the media. Why not just have one class about feminism and assign each student to ex-

plore a different aspect of the field? Having eliminated that whole breadth thing, we could probably force that student to increase his or her productivity to one or two papers a week.

Extra incentives to boost productivity might be needed. Grades are fine, of course, but I think we should institute downsizing. If it works for corporations, it can work for the classroom.

Consider a class of 40 people. Why should a professor have to waste his or her time correcting and educating students earning C's or low B's? Just cut them out of the system and make the A students work harder. If they don't, just fire them, too. There are always more kids who want to go to college.

If, for whatever reason, we run out of hardworking Oregonians, we can always ship some of the routine classes out to foreign countries. I'm sure Latin American children would be glad to compose Spanish essays, for example. For that matter, there's no good reason we can't let Asian laborers work on Writing 121 papers — they might not receive the sort of hands-on education American students are used to, but it

would still be an improvement over the kind of schooling they get now. Plus, it would promote democracy.

There are certain risks to this plan. Meddling government officials might try to impose unfair regulations on the education process, requiring unreasonable levels of quality to "protect" paper consumers or, worse, setting a minimum education level. As we all know, such minimum education standards would only force the University to eliminate even more students to make up for the cost.

On the other hand, government can probably be counted on to continue to subsidize the education process. After all, classrooms provide a vital role in the community by providing a needed product, and if they can't function without government assistance, then tax breaks and extra funding are clearly called for.

What we really need to demand from the government is that it allows classrooms to merge, thereby making paper purchasing easier for consumers. After all, if a French professor is doing a good job of making his or her students work, why shouldn't that class be merged with an environmental

science class that isn't performing up to snuff? Who cares if a French professor can teach environmental science? What matters is if he or she gets more product out.

In fact, the whole idea of having carefully trained professors with Ph.D.s in a particular field is probably archaic. What we need are professors trained in management who have proven their ability to drive students to write more papers.

Maybe this idea seems a little too revolutionary. Well, if you'd told Adam Smith that one day capitalism would mean multinational corporations with more power than governments and entire departments dedicated to extracting the maximum amount of corporate welfare, he probably wouldn't have believed you.

Just think. The future is now. Let's educate our students to be corporate drones; the traditional college experience just threatens to produce free thinkers who might join unions, vote for liberals and break down the very fabric of American society.

*Mike Schmierbach is the editorial editor for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.*



OPINION  
Mike Schmierbach

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### OSPIRG aids community

I read with interest the letter from Robert Wasson on the faults he finds with OSPIRG. I feel compelled to write because I can directly disprove his main criticism. OSPIRG has been very visible and active in Salem. Both student volunteers and staff have worked with legislators and the governor's office during the 1995 and 1997 sessions in which I have served. Some of the issues they provided information on have direct impact on students' lives; examples include a tuition freeze and students' rights to decide the use of incidental fees. The efforts of OSPIRG and the Oregon Student Association were instrumental in maintaining students' autonomy to decide how incidental fees should be used on each campus.

OSPIRG also has provided me with im-

portant background research on two issues that impact both students and the larger community: ATM fees and campaign finance reform. Because of the efforts of student volunteers, OSPIRG research is the type that is most valuable to state legislators, who do not have research staffs. This research was timely and based on data collected directly from Oregonians who would be most affected by the proposed legislation.

Wasson also seems to miss the point that involvement in OSPIRG is an educational experience for students. As a second-term legislator, I can assure you that this state needs all the trained, experienced "citizen activists" it can get. There is a democracy beyond the university campus — it is found in the operations of local, state and national government. OSPIRG is one of the few student organizations that make it

their mission to prepare students to get involved in their community.

Floyd Prozanski  
State Representative

#### Wasson helps students

With all the hype and misrepresentation accompanying this year's ASUO elections, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and apathetic by all the sanctimonious posturing and scare tactics the "Progressive" slate uses in its campaign. Fortunately, thanks to the hearings officers' reprimand of the Progressive elections violations, we have the unexpected opportunity to elect an individual who is more concerned about acting to protect student rights instead of espousing empty rhetoric. During her two years on the EMU board, Jenna Wasson has proven herself to be a consistent advocate of student rights, insisting on fairness and

fiscal responsibility. She fought for expansion of the Multicultural Center and worked with the International Students Association to find funding for the EMU elevator. She has endeavored time and again to make sure ASUO programs receive the same consideration for space allocation as EMU programs receive. She has cut over \$50,000 from the EMU administrative budget and advocates utilizing existing profits to pay for any increases next year so that student fees are not raised. Most recently, she forced the cancellation of the coffee contract, largely because no students were involved in making the decision. If that's not pro-student rights, I don't know what is. So when voting this week, follow credentials, not the crowd. Elect Jenna Wasson for EMU board, seat no. 4.

Jennifer Noble  
English