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Feed your head

COMMENTARY

Carol Rink

Attending college has become as common as Saturday morning cartoons for a six-year-old — it's a part of life that is expected and awaited, and people are even treated differently if they choose not to participate.

Higher education has become necessary because of the importance our society places on it. We believe that unless you earn a college degree, you won't be successful in the real world, and you won't get a good-paying job. We don't live in a time where jobs are earned through apprenticeships, and high school diplomas are at the top of our education standards.

Instead, we live in a society that is well-educated because of this trend toward higher education — a trend that should be considered valuable, respectable and worthwhile to everyone, including students who

think their time in college is just another four years of high school.

There are several reasons why higher education is beneficial to our society and to us individually. Economically, earning a college degree is the most viable solution to making a good living. People with college degrees make more money than those without. In 1999, the U.S. Census Bureau found that the annual average income for a person who graduated from high school was \$24,572, while the average income for those with a bachelor's degree was \$45,678. According to a Federal Document Clearing House press release, the gap in

Today: Carol Rink writes in support of the college experience.

Wednesday: Jack Clifford writes in opposition to the college experience.

earning potential, over a lifetime, between a high school diploma and a bachelor's degree or higher exceeds \$1 million.

However, higher education isn't just about economics and how much money you'll make after four years. College is a learning experience; here's an environment where thousands of people with completely different backgrounds come together for one reason: to earn a degree. Sometimes, this is the only thing you have in common with each other, but you learn to accept, appreciate, and gain a new perspective on life because of these people. Real-life experience often fails to

teach you these things. In college, we also participate in activities that we wouldn't do elsewhere. We attend football games and other sporting events with roommates and peers. We get involved in extracurricular activities and clubs. We play team sports. Sure, these are all things we can participate in without attending college, but the activities and organizations we give our time to are valuable because they are unique. There's nothing like the combination of a college atmosphere and a group of students getting together outside of the classroom to do what they are passionate about and interested in.



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

ultimately, higher education is not just grades 13 through 16 unless we allow it to be. College is what you make of it. Sure, you can go through class after class doing the minimal amount of work possible, but why bother? Doing the minimal amount of work is only a disservice to yourself. Don't you want to graduate college thinking you're smarter? Knowing you're smarter? Feeling like your money, time and energy was worthwhile?

In college, we have the choice of classes to take, along with what time and with which professors. There's no reason to be unsatisfied with what we learn. If the material isn't challenging enough, we have the option and are encouraged to talk to professors to discover new ways to look

at things. We can take harder classes and learn about subjects we've never heard of. Compared to high school, college gives us the luxury to make our own decisions — including when to go and what to study.

So what's the future of higher education? A Community College Week article in January said 80 percent of new jobs in the near future will require post-secondary education. In addition, a recent Oregon University System survey released this month showed that of 600 Oregon registered voters, 78 percent believe that in five years, it will be more important than it is now to have a degree in order to secure a well-paying job.

The importance of higher education should not be lost in years to come, but instead encouraged and considered a vital part of one's education because of the life lessons, experiences and opportunities college gives us. So next time you're debating whether to sleep in and miss that history lecture, think of the \$300 tuition money you're spending on that one class, and think of your future without a college degree.

Carol Rink is the online editor for the Emerald and a member of the editorial board. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. She can be reached at crink@gladstone.uoregon.edu.

commentary was not made clear. The cartoonist also wished to respond to those hurt or offended by his work, and those comments are printed below.

Jack Clifford, Emerald editor in chief

Racial insensitivity and the rights of indigenous peoples are issues I care deeply about. The point of my cartoon on Feb. 9 was to bring to light the history of a word as insensitive and derogatory as any in the English language. The cartoon was also meant to stimulate awareness among readers of the repulsiveness of the fact that pop culture celebrates and markets this utterly insulting slur in the form of a mascot for the nation's capital's professional football team (the last team to desegregate, I might add). I hope the cartoon has inspired a healthy discussion regarding this insensitive hangover of the 20th century. What do you think? Please send comments to ftb@gladstone.uoregon.edu.

Letters to the editor

Join debate; don't stop it

Student-group funding ("Money Down the Drain," ODE, Feb. 7) gives groups a better shot at achieving their goals. Few would argue with that. Although, many might disagree with the groups. How many student groups do you agree or disagree with? Who knows, you might even be a member of a student organization that disagrees with another student organization.

There is a wide variety of groups out there. But whether you take the opportunity or not, issues — and students' organizing — will still exist, and you have the opportunity, as everyone does, to organize around issues too. You could work on issues that affect people across the state or the country or the world.

Student fees help make those opportunities happen. It's like having

a ticket to a giant amphitheater where you can play a part.

Still, some disagree not only with the student group but also with the idea of supporting groups at all. Would you deny your fellow student the opportunity to express themselves in class? Would you close down the business school because you study science?

Please, participate in the debate; don't try and stop it. If something new frightens you, learn more about it. Knowledge like this, available in this "marketplace of ideas," can change your mind or reaffirm the views you already had. You will find other people you agree with or respectfully disagree with, but you will always find people organizing. You will find people organizing in the real world too.

Ryan Messick
 junior
 business

Poll Results

Every week, the Emerald prints the results of our online poll and the poll question for next week. The poll can be accessed from the main page of our Web site, www.dailyemerald.com. We encourage you to send us feedback about the poll questions and results.

Last week's question

How many hours a day do you spend on the Internet?

Results: 99 total votes
 1-3 hours — 39 votes, or 39.4 percent
 4-7 hours — 30 votes, or 30.3 percent
 8-12 hours — 11 votes, or 11.1 percent
 12 hours or more — 19 votes, or 19.2 percent

That's a lot of people spending 12 hours or more online. Sure, theonline.com is great, but don't they have classes?

This week's question

What has been the single most satisfying aspect of your education at the University of Oregon?

The choices:
 Professors and curriculum
 Extracurricular activities
 Earning a degree
 There is no satisfying aspect

ODE responds to cartoon controversy

Our editorial cartoon that ran in the Feb. 9 issue ("The evolution of the redskin in America"), sparked several angry and concerned responses from readers, directed either at the Emerald or at the cartoonist, Frank Silva.

While the individual reactions are respected, I feel as though there was some misinterpretation of the cartoon's point. The images depicted were not intended to debase Native Americans, but instead to provoke outrage that the term "redskin" still survives in today's lexicon.

The Emerald's editorial editor, Michael Kleckner, and I approved the cartoon for publication, believing that its harsh reality would make people think about how little the white-dominated culture has progressed in eliminating this degrading term. We apologize if that

CORRECTION

The article "PFC debates Emerald, Philosophy club budgets — again" [ODE, Feb. 9] misstated the amount of annual fundraising generated by the Emerald. The dollar amount should have been approximately \$800,000.

The Emerald regrets the error.