



The Academic Disposition: An RIT Opinion

by Jeremiah Parry-Hill

Early this year, President Simone addressed RIT's best and brightest students at a dinner in their honor. Confusing to some was his list of what he considered to be the top administrative accomplishments of the previous year. These included the installation of the alcohol policy and the barring of the Rochester Cannabis Coalition (a group dedicated not to consumption and use of marijuana, but rather to legislative debate and education around the topic). Ever the economist-poet, he is alleged to have summarized his feelings alliteratively:

"We showed them that the people with the pocketbooks hold the power."

Rest assured; money will ever triumph over organized inquiry, personal responsibility, and free expression. Don't be misled into thinking that I have anything personal against Dr. Simone. These observations should not be taken on the same level as, say, the Reporter's annual empty attacks on administrative figures only for the sake of riling those figures. From a purely clinical stance, I see a certain beauty of efficiency in what the administration has done. In terms of marketing, it makes perfect sense to keep anything that might upset Mom and Dad out of the hands of their children. Some schools feel that their students are adults; others, such as ours, recognize the very real monetary value of *in loco parentis* practices.

There is another view in academia, albeit an increasingly unpopular one, which holds that the pursuit of knowledge is noble in and of itself; money is secondary. This romantic notion is clearly not what's for sale at RIT. Our annual increases in enrollment are owed in a large way to the golden promise of a high-paying career upon graduation. A very successful co-op program has given RIT the reputation of "a good place to go to get a job." Why should I, then, be surprised, annoyed, or disgusted when a classmate chides my professor for dwelling too long on "useless theory"? He's bought into the promise; "teach me what I need to get a job, underlying principles be damned." Never mind, for the moment, that the promise of a \$40k or \$50k job has been hollow for many graduates.

The lifeblood of the Institute is tuition. More than any other source of income, we depend on the sheer numbers of paying customers (students) to drive this business. We have done a tremendous job at collecting the quick buck; we admit many, take great pains to retain those that fall behind, and tolerate worse student behavior than the classroom display I mentioned. Why? Because the numbers must stay up.

Instead of enumerating the ways in which he has made the Institute safe for white-bread America, perhaps Simone would have done better to congratulate the student honorees for succeeding at all in the midst of an overwhelming number of cheaters, opportunists, drunkards, perverts, and wastrels of everyone's time.



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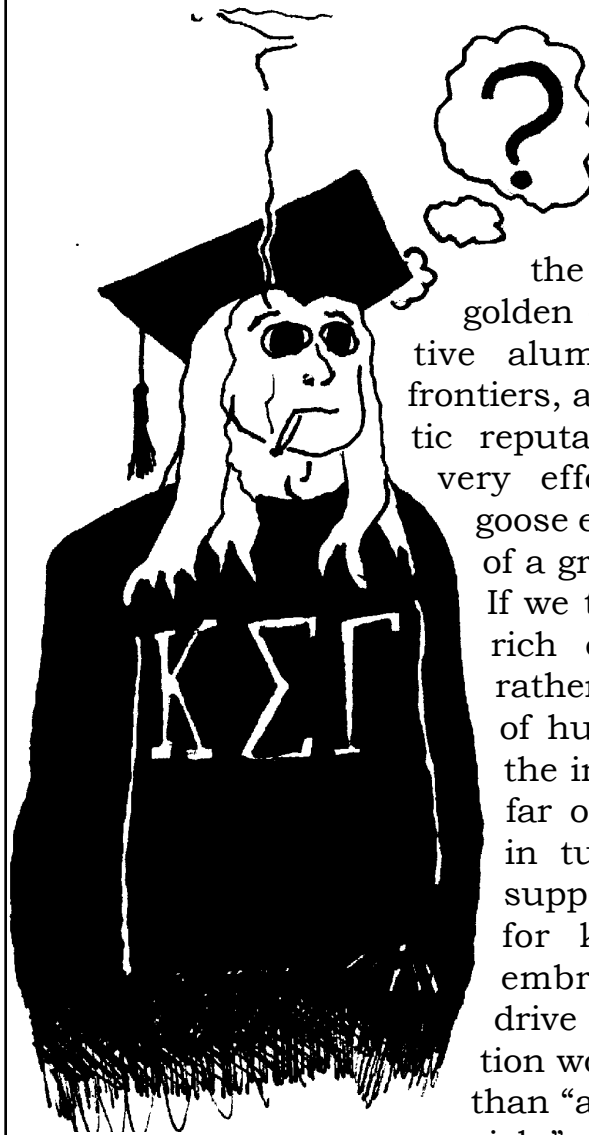
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By tolerating insincere students, we're gravely compromising the education of the sincere ones. The "goose" that is the student body has the potential to lay many golden eggs in the form of positive alumni relations, research frontiers, and an increased scholastic reputation. Unfortunately, we very effectively slaughter that goose every year, all for the sake of a greasy buck.

If we took the time to create a rich experience for students rather than become a factory of human cattle for industry, the immaterial benefits would far outweigh any initial drop in tuition inflow. If only we supported the academic drive for knowledge rather than embrace the materialistic drive for a career, our reputation would be more substantive than "a place to go to get a good job."

Higher Education: Under Fire from Drug Warriors

by Chris Maj

What! No more financial aid for college? Thank the War on Drugs.

Each year, over one-third of the nation's college students borrow \$35 billion in federal money under the auspices of the Higher Education Act. With 15 million people in college, it's the largest federal entitlement by number enrolled after Social Security and Medicare. But last October's reauthorization of the 1965 Act puts at risk the education of millions of America's college students.

Now, students are starting to respond. Their concerns are widespread, ranging from threats on academic freedom to the law's potential impact on diversity. Some see this as

another extension of America's failed drug policy, while many question whether denying people an education will help to stop drug abuse. But whatever their reasons, student activists across the country are addressing this issue, even at the politically dry Rochester Institute of Technology.

"The scope of the War on Drugs is needlessly expanding into higher education," said RIT student Mike Eck, a member of Students for Sensible Drug Policy. The student group has been active in educating the RIT community about the issues surrounding drugs and drug policy. In December, they successfully petitioned RIT's Student Government to pass a resolution calling for reform of the Act. The vote was the first of its kind in the nation, and the resolution has now passed at universities in Colorado, Connecticut and California.

Organizers stress the importance of creating educational opportunities for dealing with the nation's drug problem.

"If education is the gateway to betterment, and if drug use is the way to self-destruction, then the denial of education to someone who uses drugs will force them into an endless cycle of self-destruction," said Students for Sensible Drug Policy member Scott Devlin. He has helped to lead the RIT-based effort to change the law. "SSDP has been working hard for reform here at RIT, and the movement is now active on over 80 campuses across the nation."

Many SSDP members believe that the national attention being given to this issue is in response to a growing concern over the questionable application of the current drug laws.

Students point to data compiled by The Sentencing Project, a criminal justice

research association. They find that blacks, while making up 13 percent of the population, constitute 13 percent of all monthly drug users but account for 35 percent of arrests for drug possession, 55 percent of convictions and 74 percent of prison sentences.

Yet the overwhelming majority of drug users are white.

Adam J. Smith, associate director of the Drug Reform Coordination Network, believes that enforcement of the current drug laws runs along racial lines and a similar fate will befall financial aid. He is working with schools like RIT to coordinate the national student effort for reform of the Higher Education Act. "I'm inspired by the work that is going on at RIT," said Smith.

"If students are getting active at a place like RIT, it shows how important this issue is," said Kris Lotlikar, membership director of DRCNet and former RIT student. "This law hurts students across the country and will have a negative impact on efforts to diversify academia."

Students also say the new law will disproportionately affect those of low to moderate incomes because they are in need of student aid the most. The financially affluent can not only afford to attend college without financial assistance, but they avoid jeopardizing their aid from the start because they are better able to afford legal defense.

Many student activists compare the harshness of the punishment to that received for other crimes.

"People don't get penalized like this even for violent crimes like robbery or arson," said SSDP member Kevin Pittinaro. "Why should violent criminals receive aid but not non-violent drug offenders? What kind of message is that?"

Supporters of the law believe that like the rest of the drug laws, it will send the message that illegal drug use is not acceptable. This is not a new stance in the War on Drugs. But has it been working?

America is no closer today to solving the drug problem than it was 20 years ago. Teenage use is again climbing near the peak levels of the late 1970s, despite the drug policies in place. Over a half million marijuana-related arrests have been made during each year of President Clinton's term, but use of the drug by young people continues to rise. Stiff legal penalties fail to deter many drug users.

With this in mind, supporters of the Higher Education Act reform effort say the new law will not change anything for the better. It will only add to the problem by denying people opportunities to better their lives through education.

Reformers concede that Congress may have had good intentions when it allowed for the reinstatement of aid after successful completion of a drug treatment program, but they are quick to add that treatment options are simply unavailable for many people.

Many public officials, scholars and law enforcement personnel are looking for new approaches to reduce the harm caused by drug abuse. Last summer in an open letter to the United Nations, more than 500 global leaders said that the drug war is creating more harm than drug abuse itself.

Richard Seymour, from the Columbia University chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, is helping with the Higher Education Act resolution effort. His plan is similar to that used to pass the resolution at RIT. "Here at Columbia, we are going to try and raise student

awareness of the issue through pamphlets and a forum. Then we will take it to the student government," said Seymour.

At Hampshire College, students added a clause to the resolution before their Community Council passed it, one they hope other schools will adopt. "It requires the Community Council to send an official letter to our congressman and senators stating their opposition to the part of the Act that denies drug offenders financial aid, along with a copy of the resolution that they passed," said student Alex Kreit.

After passing the resolution, the next step for many schools is legislative action.

At RIT, Students for Sensible Drug Policy is moving to the legislative front by forming the Coalition for Higher Education Act Reform. CHEAR plans to work with students, faculty and staff to raise awareness on the law and lobby for support in Congress. It now has several faculty and student members, but is looking for more people to get involved in the effort.

"This law hurts everyone," said CHEAR member and SSDP secretary Mitch Lawrence. "More education, not less, is the answer."



Chris Maj is the President of RIT's Students for Sensible Drug Policy (ssdp@mail.rit.edu)



Howard's Happy Hour

by Howard Hao

Yup. The inevitable and unbelievable has occurred. Grajiation is just around the bend and soon I will be whisked away to Sunny Buffalo. So this is the last one. It's been a great four years working with Hell's Kitchen. Back when the Melancholy Predator was still a kicking force. And now, the end of Howard's Happy Hour.

So do the Howster one last favor. Guarantee me that one last issue with all of these final works be published sometime before grajiation. Guarantee me that I shall be able to pick up one more issue before walking away from RIT forever. Without further delay, here it is. Will keep in touch. Farewell. Enjoy, but not too much...

Ode to the City of Rochester

The city of Rochester
Reeks of violence and Yuppies.
Tony road signs lead to
Dead-ends, no outlets, nowhere.
However, beneath the behemoth cloud
Of toxic noxious menancing fumes
They call Eastman Kodak, there lies
A diamond in the rough facade that
Rears its ugly mug each day. The
Art and eatery cultures give grace.
The Village Gate, 99BBF,
Campi's, the MAG, the RPO,
Dibella's, the Village Green, and the
Little are but some of such quirks.

Disappointment

Unanticipation followed by
Stymied thoughts. But a few
Subtle clues were proposed
At a different plane of view.
Not taken seriously, these
Nasty notions can come back
And cause forlorn more than
Even words can describe.

Hell's Kitchen

Submit!
Submit, all you writers,
Poets, bards of the world!
We need your support!
Submit!

Goodbye

Gone are the delicious times
And memorable adventures.
I hate saying goodbye.

Bitterness

I've had enough!
He cried for the world to hear
But of course, the world did not hear
And no one paid any attention to
A bitter, bitter crumpled garbage
Stuck in a world of buzzing lights
Of frozen peas and dirty laundry
Infomercials and catalysts
He jammed the barrel into his mouth
Aimed but could not bring himself
To pull the trigger...

Weariness and Its Course

flowing through the stygian nape
of cabezas beyond the imagination,
it relies not only on your powers
but feeds like ravenous vultures
on brains, turning into mishmash,
baubles dangling like toys on
baby's playpen contraption.
I need a break from it all, from
all the euphony, cacophony,
alliteration, assonance, asides,
and characterizations. away for
a minute disappearance.

Fiction for Free: Finale

by Howard Hao

...and so he finished scrawling the last line,
the last thought. So hard it was to think when
the mind is reflecting other matters. Carefully
laying the fountain pen down beside the well-
worn writing tablet, he took a brief moment to
stretch his tired, aching fingers over his head. A
feeling of relief and final understanding washed
over him. Glancing out the window, he saw the
bright, bright inviting sunlight and smiled to
himself. A lifetime of adventure experienced, but it was time to leave. Time to see new peo-
ple and to try new things; time to move on...time to move on. But time is of no essence, he
silently repeated to himself.

Sadly, slowly he rose from his cushioned seat and pushed the chair aside with a horri-
ble creak. He began to think aloud, savoring what little precious moments he had left at
this place. All of those wonderful times.

Good times and bad times. Now echoes of acquaintances, friends, ideas, and memories
flood his cluttered mind, forcing their way into his consciousness; they bring with them a
unwilling tear to his right eye. The people, the sights, the sounds, the harmonious inter-
twining of relationships, love, and life. Now only a slowly fading black and white photograph
heavily creased, wrinkled, lodged in his mind somewhere. It shall be treasured forever,
never to be traded for even the very vitality of his life.

Sighing, his nostrils were brutally assaulted by the dank, woody smell of the surround-
ing bevy of cardboard U-Haul packing boxes. Well, everything is all set and ready to go. In
a little while, a new life will begin and another chapter of his life will commence to write
itself. It is now all upon the very shoulders of Destiny and Fate. Time is of no essence, he
reminded himself as he trudged back to his makeshift table. He plopped down onto the
cushioned chair, letting loose a barrage of escaping air.

Reviewing his notes, he thought of a suitable final line which he quickly jotted down into
his literature: Farewell dear friends; may all your futures be grand and happy ones...

A Fond Farewell

-for Dr. Dick Doolittle

A fond and most sincere
Farewell to a sage and most
Outstanding and amusing soul,
A teacher, a thought-provoker,
A story-teller, and a listener,
A winner, a loser,
An entertainer, an audience,
A participant, a counselor,
A challenger, a prankster,
An honored guest, a guide,
A wild man, and a father.
But most importantly of all,
A wonderful and dear friend...

An ally in the otherwise

Harsh world of
Education,
Empowerment,
Entertainment, and
Experiences.

Thanks...

For everything

We salute the Great Dooman!

*"There is no easy way to say goodbye."
-Seal, "No Easy Way"*

SHOUT-OUT!

Here's to the end of a great and memorable four years at RIT!

-A special thanks to the educators that inspired me to produce this column: S. Abrams, S. Collins, J. Douthwright, P. Haggerty, M. Sullivan, M. Vaughan

-A warm, cuddly hug to the Hell's Kitchen gang: C. Diablo, Mark, Jenn, Steve, BJ, Ken, Clare, JR, Fucko, Big Daddy, Mack, Dan, Steph, Topaz, Sean, Kelly, and of course the new crew: Matt, Jeremiah, Adam, and Giles.

-A great big shout-out to: Big Jay, Shawnee Shawn, Josh the Kid, the Tubby Biaach, Big Joe, Curtis, Rainbow Brite, Golden Flower, and the Great Dooman!

-A final great big, super-duper, extra-special-with-a-cherry-on-top thanks to all the readers, fans, and critics of Howard's Happy Hour!

Miss you all lots! Please don't forget to write!

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A Path Without Pavement: The End of an Engagement

by Shawn A. Roussin

Without power steering, I have to hold my breath and work that wheel. By now, after years of navigating the same path, you'd think that old Gabriel would know the way home, but he doesn't. Perhaps the coating of dust and pollen acts as a blindfold. I'd wash it off, but it would only last a day or two, and besides, it masks the many dents and bruises scattered along his body. He is strong, dependable, and will outlive me I'm sure, but that's okay I guess. I've taken care of him for so long, now it's Gabe's turn.

Beyond the weeping trees that line each side of the gravel path, it is green, almost forever, until the hills crowd in and join hands. Their grip is not vulgar enough to hold back all that surges, and so, many breezes crawl over the green blanket to erect doll house sized tornadoes in front of Gabriel and I. The older I get though, the narrower this path seems. It was always only wide enough for Gabe (a '63 pick-up), but lately I am left wondering if its narrowing is a signal of my diminishing time.

Like a ritual, the horses dance, following a tattered course along the fence that travels the length of the path on the western side. When you are leaving, they bow their heads in mourning. When you return, they greet you, gallop about playfully, and neigh. But they always follow.

It will be hot tomorrow. Look . . .there . . .that pink tells me . . .that orange tells me . . .that sky paints its forecast. Submerging from the final duet of willows, I am overcome with feelings, and again I find it hopeless to try to fend off a smile. Gabe and I find our spot beside the stainless barn and we sit for a moment. My hands fall from the wheel and come to rest on my knees. Unconsciously, I lean forward and rest my chin where my hands once lay.

There is no one rocking, but the chair must think so because it moves back and forth in perfect time, yet it is uninhabited. It has stood on the majestic wrap-around porch since birth. Many neighbors have gathered around her . . .like the stack of hardwood in the winter and the hanging swing in the summer. Her skeleton forbids hard work, so she constantly sleeps, lying like an ornament on a midnight Christmas tree.

It is dark enough to not know if the paint on the house is glossy or flat, but light enough to know that it is white. Standing two and a half stories tall, it reeks of history. The shutters on the attic windows are closed and have been for years. Other windows only have one due to the unusually stormy winter that we had this past year. There is the one

that I placed by the bulkhead after it fell from the second floor last weekend. Several of the dark green louvers had cracked and come loose when it suffered the traumatic plunge. It's certainly an easy fix, but I'll tell you, one screw can cause endless procrastination.

As I made my way across the porch to the front door, each step was carefully planned. Like a tightrope performer on their tippy-toes, I avoided each board that would provoke creaking. I was trying not to make any noise, and must have looked like I was trying to not make any noise. Actually, I probably looked like a burglar, a stupid one for using the front door, but a burglar none-the-less. Who would know anyway? We live quite a distance from any neighbors. If you were to hold your arm straight out in front of you, give a thumbs-up, and close one eye in the direction of our closest neighbor's house, you could make their home disappear from view.

The screen door was silent as I pulled it open. The walk-in door was ajar and needed only a slight nudge to complete its journey of hospitality. The shadows that cast upon the cranberry walls seem to stretch infinitely to the ceiling. One entire wall is filled with books, treasures sitting on oak shelves, enclosed behind brittle glass doors. Each one framed in stained wood displayed a petite brass knob, tarnished and permanently finger-printed. Opposite the wall of books stands the magnificent mantle. It has been painted white, but years of fires had penetrated its purity. Deep, flawless carvings of laurel spoke of true craftsmanship. Photos in plain brass frames stand at attention in a line across the mantle's top, only to be divided symmetrically by a gold clock. Its pale face supports black Roman numerals that protrude from the hourglass figure. Unless you are concentrating on it, its cadence is inaudible. Most of the time my thoughts are louder.

A single oval carpet, light brown, covered half of the room, but is placed in the exact center. Wide pine floorboards of deep forest green mark the perimeter. Tiny gaps between them have filled with dirt that remains seeded there through each sweeping. The room is orderly and neat. Each item, each furnishing, serves a purpose, and has its place within the room. Add one candle and the room would be cluttered. Remove one picture and the room would crumble in its nakedness. Atop a sturdy floor lamp floats a cloudy shade that sprinkles light onto one end of the clean, yet worn sofa. The golden color is fading from years of feasting on sunlight that casts through the window. Many homemade quilted pillows lie neatly assigned to spaces against the backrest. Beside the couch is a small wooden end table that stands as high as the couch's arm. A half-full glass of iced tea rests comfortably at the edge, its remaining ice sweating to stay cool, but failing in the summer's heat. I am thirsty . . . very thirsty, but I am patient, because she lies there, and all of the temptations in this world can not break my stare at this moment. She is half-sitting and half-lying on her side. The back of her left hand rests across her brow as if it was dabbing a tear of perspiration. Her other hand caresses an open book below her breasts. Most of her shoulder length blonde hair is tied back except for a couple of locks whispering down her temples on either side. Traveling from her neck to her knees is a delicate white sleeveless nightgown decorated with elegant lace at the hem and at the point of cleavage. Both legs are bent and parallel, and her soft white feet only appear cold. My hands want to coat them. My fingers want to soothe them. Each toe is full, perfectly rounded, and decreasing in size. Their nails are that of a worker, short and outlined.

I know her eyes are blue because she has smiled at me before. She has kissed me before. But this time they are closed. Her long lashed have weighed them down. Is she thinking of me? I am paralyzed. Like countless nights before, I just want to watch her sleep, watch her breathe. I close my eyes to savor her. I am thinking of her . . . is she thinking of me?

Shawn A. Roussin is a Second Year Physician Assistant Student