

Students Speak Out...

Clinton Challenges The Youth Summer Graduates Left In The Cold

On Monday, March 1, the 32nd anniversary of John F. Kennedy's founding of the Peace Corps, President Clinton challenged young people across the nation to "answer the call to service" and outlined his program to make a college education available to every American.

In an impassioned address to over ten thousand students at the Rutgers University Athletic Center in Piscataway, New Jersey, the President invited his audience to join him in "a great national adventure that will change America forever, and for the better".

The President also announced his "Summer of Service" summer leadership training program in which over 1,000 young people will work on service projects with children at risk. The summer program will serve as forerunner to a much larger program which will eventually allow over 100,000 young people to pay their way to college through community service.

Under the President's plan, young people could borrow the money for college from the government, then pay back the loan in one of two ways: either as a small percentage of their income over time, or through one or two years of community service work before, during, or after college.

In his remarks, the President encouraged listeners to "drop me a line" if they were interested in the summer program, or to tell him what kind of service projects exist in their communities and what kinds they would like to see. Following the speech, the President discussed the program in detail during an interview with MTV's Tabitha Soren.

Other members of the administration echoed the President's challenge at various service sites across the country. In Madison, Wisconsin, Vice-President Al Gore toured the University of Wisconsin Arboretum built by young people in the Wisconsin Conservative Corps. Later he discussed the national service initiative with students at a town hall meeting in the University of Wisconsin Union.

Mrs. Tipper Gore visited the Child Day Care Center and the Flagler Home at St. Joseph's Villa, a transitional housing program in Richmond, Virginia then spoke to students from the Jepson School of Leadership, a leadership and community service academic program offered by the University of Richmond.

In North Carolina, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt helped members of the Durham Service Corps build a trail at the Clemmons Educational State Forest, in Clayton. In Boston, Secretary of Labor Robert Reich visited members of Youthbuild, a corps of youths who rehabilitate low-income housing. And in the Nation's Capital, Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala visited with members of DC Service Corps who work with severely ill children at the Hospital for Sick Children.

A Little Respect...

by Kellie S. Fernandez

There appears to be a lack of respect for professors and fellow students on campus. This is both saddening and annoying. First of all, our instructors have years of training, experience, and education. These people are here to guide us and deserve proper treatment by the student body. It seems that many are blinded to the fact that these individuals are here for our benefit.

Secondly, some of you have no consideration for those seated around you. Some may share your careless attitude, yet most are trying to make their college career a success. Immature behavior interrupts the learning process. A few examples of this are:

- coughing
- rattling car keys
- dropping papers repeatedly
- raising one's hand when you have no comment or question
- talking in an audible voice to a "buddy"
- sighing loudly
- scraping one's chair back and forth

Instead of disturbing your peers and garnering their contempt, one could:

- make a list of what you would rather be doing
- write a letter
- mentally reliving your last vacation
- review things to do for the day, week, month, etc.
- pay attention to the lecture
- participate in discussion sessions (Remember, the only dumb question is the one never asked)

Finally, it is depressing to see individuals act as if they truly do not wish to be here when our country has thousands of would-be students who cannot find the necessary money or opportunities to attend college. Is there anyone putting a gun to your head and forcing you to attend? As adults, each and every one of us should want to be here. If you truly feel that this is not for you, then please leave; you are wasting precious time and energy. If being here is what you desire, please have enough self-respect to behave like an adult moving onward and upward toward life-fulfilling goals.

by vatrice mack

Those students who are graduating this coming summer are being left out in the cold because they will be waiting to receive their diplomas. Summer graduates will not be able to receive their diplomas until December when they will be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony.

Like many summer graduates, I had anticipated leaving school and getting on with my career. Now it looks as if summer graduates will have to stick around to make sure they receive their diplomas or else pray that the diplomas actually make it to the forwarding addresses that they leave behind. If our diplomas do not reach us, then we have the great opportunity of calling the school and making a big fuss over the whereabouts of our diplomas.

Last year a scheduled summer graduation was held. The administration had an entire year to organize alternatives for those summer graduates who would not be around to participate in commencement exercises in December. Many students are here in Fayetteville because of connections with the military. This means that many of us will be stationed at other posts by December.

One alternative that was suggested to me was to leave a parent's address where the college could send the diploma. After four hard years of work, I doubt that I want my diploma to be mailed to a parent. What about those of us who don't have a relative or friend that we can trust to receive this hard-earned piece of sheepskin?

Not only will summer graduates not receive their diplomas until December, but the fact that they graduated will not appear on their transcripts until December. One solution offered to me was that the registrar could write a letter to show prospective employers that I had completed all courses but would not graduate until December. The idea of carrying such a letter around to job interviews strikes me as annoying. There also is the possibility that the employer will frown on the idea of hiring a student who has completed all the required courses, but has not graduated yet. This situation may raise questions and doubts in the minds of employers. How many employers do you know of that will call the school to clear up their doubts or questions? Next to none. I think the administration seems to be confusing the idea of "graduating" and "participating in the graduation ceremony". I think that participating in the ceremony is something that is often done to follow tradition. Yet, many students of the past have graduated but did not attend graduation exercises. The administration could have students sign a sheet of paper stating whether or not they plan to participate in December exercises. If the student does not plan to participate, then the school should send them their diplomas this summer once they have paid their intent to graduate fee and successfully completed their coursework.

Maybe I am wrong about the alternative I was offered, but there certainly should be a better way to handle this situation. With most issues there are choices that one can make.

I hope that by next summer the administration will have found a better way to deal with summer graduates.

A Response To Respect...

Dear Ms. Fernandez,

I must give credit where credit is due. You did identify a problem that is quite shameful at a college level. However, I have to take you to task on a couple of points you raised.

First of all, is it such an unforgivable sin if one coughs in class? I take it that you find it particularly offensive if someone with a running nose or an irritated throat attends class. Well, ma'am, I have news for you: good students get sick too!

Secondly, how on earth did you come up with your so-called solutions to the problem? "Mentally reliving your last vacation?" Give me a break! The only suggestion I can agree with is "pay attention to the lecture." Otherwise, get real. The rest of the ideas are ludicrous, to say the least. For example, you say

"the only dumb question is the one never asked." Try "a dumb question is one that has absolutely nothing to do at all with the lesson".

Maybe some people are here against their own wishes, but you can be sure that time will weed such "students" out. You may not believe this, but some people actually want an education. Me, for example. Why else would a person travel halfway round the world, leaving friends and family behind? To party everyday? I don't think so.

Consider this as well: I'm sure that you have heard the phrase "the pot calling the kettle black." If you're concentrating so hard on the lecture, what are you doing surveying your classmates to see what inattentive students do?

Derek Tang