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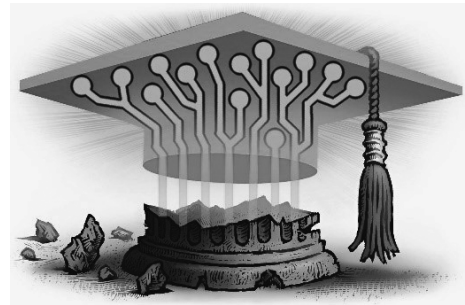
Tekst 11

Letters

The new diploma

1

If Prof. David Gelernter's doomsday scenario ("A High-Tech Rebirth From Higher Ed's Ashes," op-ed, Jan. 23) is ever enacted, the word "college" will be replaced by "post-secondary school," and what were colleges will be trade schools, equipping students with the tools of their trade and little else. What bothers Prof. Gelernter is the failure of educators "to produce adults who can read and write and speak and listen like adults." The fault often lies with those behind the desk. If English teachers will accept ungrammatical prose, arguing that it is content and not form that matters, and speech teachers allow students to use "like" and "you know" without weaning them away from such verbal crutches, what can be expected of the young adults who are victims of such sloppy pedagogy?



Em. Prof. Bernard F. Dick
Fairleigh Dickinson University
Teaneck, N.J.

2

So much of the college experience is about young people developing socially and encouraging them to form opinions, and to learn to express those opinions. Perhaps their secondary educations have failed, if they need to spend the majority of their college course work doing rote survey classes. It is a wonderful thing to be able to peruse and choose electives that open up sophisticated, abstract thinking.

While I'm a new fan of online learning, there is no substitute for face-to-face teaching (as Prof. Gelernter admits), and the suggestion that the Trump administration is going to completely revamp higher education "using not much money" is just, well, alternative facts.

Susan Roberson
New York

3

From my perch within one of the most politicized academic disciplines on campus (Middle East Studies), I believe David Gelernter has it mostly right. Universities and colleges fail their student-customers and the nation that backs their education loans by offering a low intellectual and financial return on their investments. The persistent attempt to indoctrinate students with a politically correct belief system that leaves them with few skills, fewer job prospects and disdain for America and its ideals is central to this failure.

As long as the Education Department continues to underwrite the existing and emerging education platforms, and course content flows from the same biased sources (also underwritten by government), higher education will continue to decline. The new administration needs one bold idea and no new funds to fix this – get the Education Department out of the business of higher education.

*David Silverstein
Washington*

4

Though disruptive, technology can ensure many colleges thrive. Prof. Gelernter suggests there will be more certificates, but I don't see them replacing a college degree. I am comfortable with an experienced programmer signing a certificate saying a student has studied a particular programming language. Packaging a group of certificates and calling them a college degree is not something I am comfortable with.

Ultimately, the spirit and sense of excitement on a campus is hard to replicate online, especially for undergraduates who experience four years living together in an intellectual environment. This is a university's major contribution to preparing graduates for society.

*Prof. Henry C. Lucas Jr.
University of Maryland
College Park, Md.*

adapted from *wsj.com*, 2017