

OUR STANCE

Students must watch their wallets

Every year, a new set of students sets foot on campuses around the country, ready to embark on their college careers. They look forward to learning, socializing and simply enjoying life as best they can before they are cast out into the real world. What most students probably don't look forward to is the perils of financial responsibility.

Qvisory, a nonprofit online advocacy and service organization for young adults, released a study this week that details just how much of a toll the current economic situation is taking on 18 to 34-year-olds. The report, titled *Young People: Living on the Edge*, cites a survey which brings forward the most important concerns on the minds of young Americans — the economy being paramount this year.

The study illustrates some deeply disturbing facts about the young adult age bracket. Three out of four young people report having gone deeper in debt over the past year. One in five reported having had their phone, cable or utilities cut off, and one in seven have faced repossession or had their credit card cancelled due to non-payment. One in three young people who owe money on a credit card owe more than \$10,000 overall.

Yet perhaps the most disturbing fact: Qvisory states that more than half of all young people have gone without health insurance at some point in the past five years — including 75 percent of those who currently have medical debts.

“Young adults are the most

likely age group to be uninsured, with nearly 20 million individuals between the ages of 18 and 34 falling into this category,” said Ron Williams, chairman and CEO of Aetna (one of the country's largest health insurance companies) in a press release.

College is just not the same as it was in much of the 20th century. The costs involved with a college education have risen exponentially faster than the overall inflation rate, causing many students to be financially strapped throughout their college career or forcing them to take out costly loans. Rising costs are due in part to increased demand for college educated workers, corporate greed on behalf of companies that see college students as a giant ATM and fiscal irresponsibility by the government.

Universities used to be run by educators, not by business people. Most legitimate schools, UCF included, are nonprofit, yet every decision usually comes down to the bottom line rather than the good of the students or faculty. One UCF professor recently said that they put in a request to their school's dean for a new instructor to be hired in their department. This was to ease the increased workload that had resulted from faculty turnover and student demand, which had created larger classes. The dean replied to the professor's request by stating that they should submit a business proposal with a cost-versus-benefit analysis that would justify the hiring of a new instructor.

Apparently in the 21st century, professors are not only expected

to be educators but financial analysts as well.

This isn't what colleges were meant to be. They weren't meant to be for-profit companies driven by numbers. Education used to be a top priority, but it doesn't appear that way anymore. Administrators scrimp and save every penny possible and then have the audacity to create questionable business partnerships that affect students' lives. Case in point: the “preferred lender lists” that were discovered in 2007, alleging that schools around the country, including UCF, were directing students to certain loan providers and were receiving financial kickbacks in return.

The economy is obviously difficult for everyone presently, but it is hitting especially hard on college campuses where students are being charged an arm and a leg for nearly everything involved with their education. Ideally, students would be able to acquire a college education with little to no out of pocket expense. Yet, because of increased costs, many students have had to take on jobs outside of school and, as Qvisory reports, the number of parents loaning their children money has doubled over the last year.

In reality, it all comes down to responsibility. In business, it is the responsibility of a company's board of directors' to look out for the best interest of the shareholders. Therefore, it is the responsibility of administrators to look out for the best interest of the shareholders in a university — the students — because without students, there would be no university.



TERRENCE NOWICKI / THE WESTERN FRONT



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READER VIEWS

Condemning curiosity exemplifies intolerance

What Webster Cook did is something that should not be condemned. From the article published in the *Central Florida Future*, it appears that his friend was curious as to what the Eucharist is and Cook decided to show this to his friend. Isn't college about curiosity and finding yourself? This definitely fits within the realm of curiosity. Yes, it might be understood as disrespecting the religion, but the events that took place following are not appropriate for someone who was just trying to explain a part of his religion to a friend.

To impeach Webster Cook is wrong; it is showing UCF students and the public at large that UCF is intolerant and not understanding of its students' curiosity.

NAVA COHEN
HISTORY MAJOR
SENIOR 2008

under false pretenses and to take it home and hold it hostage shows he knew exactly what he was doing. Mr. Cook's behavior shows no respect, tolerance or diversity and therefore should not be representing the school in such a way. Would any other religion be treated in such a way? By the way, it is not a cracker!

PEGGY STINNET

Actions hurtful for SGA and the Catholic religion

I write this as a person of faith. I thought I should share my thoughts on the recent article about the SGA Sen. Webster Cook. He chose to receive a religious symbol and chose to keep the bread instead of the traditional action of eating it. We must not rush too quickly to judgment about the young man. Let us not get out the stitching yet to prepare him for his scarlet letter.

There is no doubt without one ounce of equivocation he made a wrong decision. To take a symbol known to Christians worldwide and attempt to break protocol was asking for trouble. It is best to keep in mind this was a gathering of like-minded students who volunteered to show up. If he did not agree with their beliefs then he was free to leave the service at any time. One will never get a point across to those they wish to inform by desecrating their religion.

I believe the decision on whether he is impeached can not be based solely on the concept of insulting a religious institution. Since the student government is a governmental entity and separate from religious doctrine. However, his behavior alone satisfies even the slightest notion of possible impeachment. As a SGA senator, Cook is supposed to be a paragon of leadership to the UCF community. He is supposed to represent the institutional apparatus of the schools government. He not only insulted one group, he has negatively reflected the SGA.

This issue goes beyond a person's position or a newspaper article. It is something deep within this young man who chose to cause such controversy. He may have an antipathy towards religious institutions. Only he can answer that. An impeachment or public ridicule will not bring a tangible solution to this issue. I would recommend that if Cook wanted to stay on as a senator he would have to do several things.

1. Meet with leaders of the Catholic Campus Ministry on campus to discuss the importance of the Eucharist.
 2. Offer some sort of apology to the UCF community for causing such controversy.
 3. Possibly a diversity training course.
- Did he willingly and intentionally take the Eucharist to cause harm and disarray? Did he intentionally file a hazing charge against the Catholic ministry to cause further commotion? If the answer is yes, then those things say more about his character than the church or any other institution ever could. The only scarlet letter this person needs is “S” for stupidity.

Who wins here? Next week and always religious organizations will meet, next week and always there will be those who hold resentment toward religious institutions. Next week and always the equation of life will probably remain the same. The only changes may be felt in the hearts and minds of those affected probably a long time after these words or other words will be written.

DEMETRIUS HEATH
POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR

Locavores urge for edible gardens

The children's book *The Giving Tree* tells a tale of a tree that sacrifices everything including its branches, shade and fruit for a young boy until only a stump remains. However, even the stump serves a final purpose as a seat for the young boy who over the years has developed into an old man.

Similar to this story, we, the consumer, are abusing the environment and taking advantage of its ability to provide.

Therefore, locally grown food would serve the dual purpose of preserving the environment and eliminating the middle man that exists between cultivation and the consumer.

Kitchen Gardeners International launched the ‘Eat the View’ campaign as a way of putting local foods and their many benefits not only onto America's political agenda but also onto its most famous landscape, the White House lawn,” said Roger Doiron, head of KGI. “It made sense before and — with food costs, fuel costs and environmental concerns at all time highs — it makes sense again.”

KGI is a Maine-based nonprofit network of 6,000 gardeners from 100 countries who serve to encourage people to cultivate their own gardens and, in effect, alleviate the cost of consumption. His slogans reflect his political views regarding the cost of an industrialized economy, dependent on the mobilization of produce. “1,500 miles, 400 gallons,” read the signs, a succinct way of displaying the average number of miles food travels and the gallons of fuel used in the transport.

According to the *Orlando Sentinel*, “there's a rising cost of food, about 45 percent worldwide in two years” as well as “recognition of an international food shortage.” In other words,

“[we're] growing corn to feed cars while people are going hungry,” as reporter Ellen Goodman indicated.

Namely, the campaign Eat the View aims to “plant healthy, edible landscapes in high impact, high visibility places ...” according to the official Eat the View Web site.

The urgency for solutions such as this are fueled by necessity due to the uncertainty regarding safety and sustainability. For example, the spinach scare of 2006 and more recently, the contaminated tomatoes of 2008. Furthermore, natural disasters, such as floods or hurricanes, take an irrevocable toll on the environment, destroying the fertility and productivity of the terrain.

The idea of an “edible garden” being developed in one of the most politicized locations recognized nationally demonstrates the misfortune of the current state of affairs. Our government, and more importantly our president, need to lead by example and adapt to the progressive nature of things to allow for a solution to end hunger and preserve our environment.

People are encouraged to sign a White House Food Garden Petition as part of the Eat the View campaign which states, “The White House is America's House” and should set a positive example for the country and the world ... and showing how we can meet global challenges such as climate change, food security and fossil fuel dependence.”

Goodman of the *Orlando Sentinel* alludes to former presidents such as John Adams, Woodrow Wilson and the Roosevelts, emphasizing their compassion for nature with the cultivation of a Liberty Garden and a Victory Garden in a time when 40 percent of the nation's produce came from citizen gardeners.

If we as a society insist on exhausting all of our resources instead of learning from our predecessors, then we might as well prepare for the inevitable: A world void of biology, natural resources and, ultimately, life.

The Web site for Eat the View suggests ways for concerned readers to get involved and aid the movement. Primarily, it suggests that interested people identify a landscape with the potential to be “edible-ized” similar to the residents of San Francisco who are planting a Victory Garden or the governors of Maine and New York.

The final step is to vote for the idea of a food garden on the White House lawn at OnDay-One.org.

Places like San Francisco are showing their adaptive nature as they acknowledge the likelihood of an ambiguous future.

According to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, butter prices will be up 60 percent and vegetable oils 80 percent in 10 years. Therefore, it is imperative that we appreciate the forewarning and work to be preventive, rather than reactionary.

Furthermore, scientists associated with the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development predict that “today's fossil fuel and water-hungry agriculture won't be able to feed the world” and therefore they insist on “a more sophisticated, organic, democratic and local agriculture,” as reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Instead of speculating and hypothesizing possible solutions, it is time Americans take advantage of the solutions that have already been proven to work in the past and implement them in the future.

Sen. Cook's actions stir additional societal issues

The case of Webster Cook v. The Catholic Church is rapidly becoming ridiculous. Being raised a Catholic, he knew what the consequences of his actions were going to be. You receive the Eucharist in front of a Eucharistic Minister — end of story. You can't take something out of a store because you “wanted to show it to your friend,” and then come back inside pay for it. Whoever tried to stop him from taking the Eucharist, either physically or verbally, was right for doing so, just as it would have been right for a store employee to try and reprimand a shoplifter. Instead of filing formal complaint or using his position as a senator to amicably deal with his concern that the SGA funds a religious activity on campus, I believe that he intentionally tried to call attention to himself in order to create a media frenzy. The University of Florida had Andrew Meyer, now we have Webster Cook. Both took radical stances, garnered national attention and attracted instant Internet fame, and both are embarrassing to their institutions.

However, I would like to thank Webster for raising a more important societal issue. Attacks against Christianity, especially Catholicism, are simply not taken as seriously as attacks on other religions. I can personally attest to this after taking an Introduction to World Religions course while having the professor look down her nose at me for a semester for my religious beliefs. Most reports on this story have been stepping on eggshells, afraid to side with the Church in order not to offend anyone and it infuriates me. If this were any other religion, there would have been a public outcry for action and this issue would have been resolved the next day rather than the weeks that it has been dragged out.

SEAN KELLY

Disrespect warrants an impeachment procedure

I agree that Mr. Cook should be impeached from his position in the student senate. He was not acting respectfully toward the Catholic tradition of the Eucharist and if he did not fully understand it he should not have received it either. The individual who stopped him was well within her right. He received it