



IN THE RICE BOX

Clinging Onto 17

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When people talk about the “big” stages in life, we talk about our sweet 16—what is depicted as the climax of the teenage experience—and the turning of 18—finally endowed with the legal freedom to do most things as we please—but we often forget the transitional state of age 17.

We go from 16 to 18, often without considering what it means to be 17, one of the most important years of our lives. This is the age when we’re expected to somehow shift gears from the invincibility of adolescence to the fragility and complexity of adulthood. This is the age when we’re expected to perfectly map our future, whether it’s continuing education in college or immediately jumping into the workforce.

For many of us, 17 is when we will make our first mistakes that will carry into adulthood—plenty more to come, surely—and embracing these mistakes is almost contrary to our nature

Every other day, it feels like I won’t be going anywhere with my life, but I’ve learned to accept that it’s natural to have no idea how to spend the next few decades when I’ve only lived a fraction of my life. This year isn’t when our decisions become the “be-all, end-all” of our lives; this is when we decide who we want to be first.

When we look back, it will be easy to remember the sweet 16 gathering with loved ones and the surge of freedom that came with 18, but I will also remember the bittersweet 17, when I learned that what I do wrong is worth the same, if not more, as what I do right.

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It’s that time of the year again: seniors are now into their last year of high school and determining what to do with the rest of their lives.

A good majority, 66.2 percent in 2012 according to the U.S. Department of Labor, usually choose to continue with higher education. Some may choose private or public universities; however some may opt for a for-profit college. For those who may not know of for-profit colleges, or proprietary schools, they are essentially schools whose primary focus is making money.

For-profit schools play a large role in the student loan crisis. The difference between for-profit colleges and universities such as USC and Harvard is that the latter aren’t run like businesses; for-profit colleges are sponsored by the owners of the colleges and focus more on pleasing their shareholders rather than providing an education for their students. For these

sponsors and business owners, making more money is their number one priority.

For-profit schools have recently been placed under suspicion for deceitful recruiting tactics, promising prospective students a “good career” and later having them take out thousands of dollars in loans when they enroll. However, the government wanted to pass a “Gainful Employment Act” which would regulate the for-profit college system.

The bill would make sure a number of students would receive work after they would graduate. If they did not find a career, there financial aid would be taken away which would force these colleges to lose money.

However due to heavy funding to Congress from college owners like John Sperling, a weaker, less regulated version was passed. An example would be Full-Sail University, which is sponsored by Mitt Romney and his fund-raising chair; one can see promotions for for-profit uni-

versities in his interviews.

A four year bachelor’s degree is around \$63,000, while a community college would cost around \$53,000. From 2005 to 2012, the number of students taking out loans increased 66 percent, from 23.3 million to 38.8 million.

However only 12 percent of Americans attend and enroll in these colleges, yet approximately 50 percent of the American college loan crisis comes from these students borrowers.

With the demanding schedules of many of these colleges, it’s hard to balance school, a job, and a social life, causing a lower rate of graduating within four years. In fact, the four year graduation rate of a program such as the video game art pro-

gram at Full-Sail University, which costs \$81,000, is 14 percent out of the 44 percent that graduate.

The degree students can earn from for-profit colleges are not reputable and creates difficulties for these students to find jobs and es-

leges are around 19 percent higher than those of public universities.

This incredibly high tuition causes many students to take out loans their degrees will probably not help them pay off in the future, especially given

that finding a job becomes even harder with a degree from a for-profit school.

Ultimately, we can establish that for-profit colleges act only in the interests of their shareholders, rather than for the best education they can give their students.

A college or university should do as much as possible to help their students become ultimately successful in life without a monetary-based agenda. The misleading nature of for-profit colleges should not be trusted nor further supported.



Walmart Publicizes Vicissitude in Health-Care Policy

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Although same-sex couples have become widely accepted relationships, just a few years ago, homosexuality had a public stigma that allowed organizations to withhold benefits on the sole reason of sexual preference.

Currently, multiple companies and organizations have adjusted their policies to accommodate all potential employees. For instance, Walmart has recently stated it will offer health insurance benefits to its employees and their partners working in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, regardless of the partner’s gender, beginning in 2014.

Walmart addresses all statuses of homosexual couples by including couples that have not been married yet, since multiple states still do not allow same-sex marriage. There is a concerted effort not only in treating all workers equally, but also in giving them equal opportunity to contribute their talent to Walmart. By changing the policy to be more inclusive, Walmart equally motivates all workers to contribute their best efforts.

Workers are not defined by which gender they are attracted to; workers are perceived by how productively they work. Sexual preference plays no role in determining talent or mar-

keting skills. Multiple companies may unintentionally exclude certain groups from receiving the same benefits like the rest of employees. Inadvertently excluding employees with great potential on the basis of sexuality is not smart in today’s competitive economy, nor is it ethical.

Though equality is also valued, Walmart’s main goal is to thrive in the business world. Since 53 percent of the US population believes same-sex marriage should be legal, Walmart may just be using the new policy to boost their image and attract more revenue. Adjusting the health-care policy to be more inclusive seems like a way for

Walmart to make a political stance on the equality issue. After all, company revenues partially depend on how positively customers view the company, in addition to the quality of the product the company is selling. For example, despite having an anti-gay stance, Chick-Fil-A continues to thrive. Though the public statement caused many to view Chick-Fil-A negatively, customers continue to purchase their product because of the quality and possibly for the publicity Chick-Fil-A received from the situation. Multiple companies, including Walmart, could use the publicity from taking a stance on the equality issue

to attract more customers.

Using a popular human rights issue to attract attention to the company may be a successful tactic, but ethically, it is incorrect. Manipulating a customer’s passionate opinion on a severe issue to increase sales means that the company is taking advantage of the customer’s passion and increasing their own revenue with no benefit for the customer. Purchasing items from Walmart will not help combat aversion to same-sex couples.

Though Walmart may not have intentionally publicized the change to their health-care policy, the response to the change states otherwise.

Moor graphic by SIMON ZHAO

Bob Filner Brings Disgrace to San Diego

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Bob Filner, the 71-year-old mayor of San Diego, has been accused of sexual harassment by 18 women. Since his first accusation on July 22, Filner officially resigned from office on August 30.

During this time, a news poll showed that 80 percent of San Diego residents desired his resignation, in addition to all nine San Diego city council members. Filner, however, still stayed in office and, as a result, he was eventually locked out

of his own office. It was not until six weeks after the first accusation and three days after being locked out that Filner finally agreed to resign, but with the condition that the city of San Diego join in his legal defense in a sexual harassment lawsuit filed against him and the city of San Diego.

However, Mayor Bob Filner should have been pulled out of office much earlier. If he did not hold political office and was accused of sexual harassment, he would have immediately been pulled out

of office to deal with the investigation until he was cleared for duty again.

Though no reasons have been specified as to why he was allowed to stay in office until he was officially resigned rather than being dismissed from his position, the fact that Filner was able to stay in office for such a long period of time is unjust.

The now disgraced mayor of San Diego may left office on Friday, August 30, but he should have been pulled out of office earlier for his ill-behaviors.

