

Degree Worthwhile

STILL BENEFIT IN UNIVERSITY DEGREE

[Reprinted courtesy of the Toronto Star]

In countless homes in recent years, the dialogue has gone something like this:

"Gee, Dad, there's not much point in my going to university. It won't do much to get me a job when I graduate. I read where there's guys with Ph.D.'s driving cabs because they can't get work. I might as well go to community college and take a business course."

Sound familiar?

Well, don't believe it, kid. The stories about cab drivers with doctorates in English and philosophy are largely myths. They make good reading, but they are hard to track down.

While it is true that a university degree is no longer an automatic ticket to a well-paying job and a firm hold on the executive ladder, it is still the best investment a young person can make of his time and money.

According to University of Ottawa vice-rector Jean-Michel Beillard, a recent federal study shows that in January, 1979, when unemployment in Canada soared to 9.1 per cent, the overall unemployment rate for university graduates was only 3.5 per cent.

In that same month, when unemployment among young people in the 15-24 age bracket reached 14 per cent, only 6.6 per cent of the university grads in this age group were without jobs. The rate for three-year community college graduates was only 9.1 per cent, while 28.1 per cent of high school graduates were without work.

University graduates not only got more jobs, they got better paying ones.

A 1978 federal study revealed that two years after graduation, university graduates were earning a median salary of \$14,700 while community college grads earned \$13,069.

"Yeah, sure," says our hypothetical adolescent, "that stuff may hold true for doctors, lawyers and business graduates. But what about the poor slob taking philosophy or English. Who wants to hire them?"

Wrong again, son.

The studies show that it doesn't matter much what course you take. Employers are not nearly as impressed with specific skills as with the general habits of mind acquired in the course of a university education.

An employer can always teach you the

technique of entering information in the company computer, or the knack of selling his particular product.

But what he can't do is give you a broad, general education. He can't instill qualities of imagination, curiosity and logical thinking. For these, he relies on university training.

The studies also suggest that the job panic which drove thousands of university students to shift from arts and science courses to business and management were both unnecessary and regrettable.

It was unnecessary because job chances for business graduates do not seem appreciably better than for those who studied Ancient Greek or biology.

It was regrettable because many people turned away from fields of study that excited them to take up subjects that interested them less but seemed more practical. And that is regrettable because higher education should satisfy a thirst for learning, not just nob requirements. The value of a university education lies in the attitudes it forms, the wisdom it offers and the joy of discovery it brings rather than how closely it matches the job market.

Understand, son?

A COLLEGE STUDENT'S QUEST

Questions, answers
problems arise
where will I find
the knowledge. I
ponder & read
& study some
more hoping to find
the tunnel through
which I can pass
Tests, exams &
papers to do, I
trudge & carry
on silently praying
I can complete this
year & still have
my sanity. Finally
I see at the end of
my tunnel some
light appearing
and I know I'll
do alright!

Claire Hickey/80

We cram all day & further into the night at last awake we arrive with deep circles under our eyes to begin our mind goes blank, we can't remember the answers. relax & slowly we think - ah it all comes back we leave relief written all over our face - we did it; complete - we passed the test!

Claire Hickey/80

