

out against bell curves.

A third possibility is that Mr. Stinert is serious about his advice to avoid friendly students and to step on them on your way up the bell curve. In this case, I present a rebuke to his comments and a warning to all students not to take his advice.

First of all, if your first priority at university is to hit the top of the bell curve (which is a much-overemphasized priority), don't make the mistake of eliminating classroom friendships. Having someone to study with is an excellent way to raise your marks. If you should miss a lecture, it's advantageous to have someone who can lend you their notes. Just discussing class topics is also beneficial to attaining higher marks. You may boost other marks as you do this, but don't worry, it seems many loners will remain who haven't taken the advantage of classroom friendships.

Secondly, campus life is not just getting good marks. There's obviously many more aspects to it, and one of these is learning skills that will benefit you in the work field. You will not get very far as a teacher, doctor, or lawyer, if your attitude is to turn away all possibilities of new friendships.

I hope, however, that Mr. Stinert is not serious, and I also hope that students will not accept the advice he presents. It is not wise advice.

Todd Brand

More on friends

Re: "No Friends" (Oct. 6, 1987).

The comments in the letter directed at first year students regarding "No Friends" were rather frivolous. Perhaps this was written for personal reasons, however, such harsh opinions should not be inflicted on beginning or continuing university students. There are many more reasons to have friends, than not, just because of the Bell Curve and/or marks.

In case you haven't noticed, our society is made up of people who have formed relationships, sometimes known as friendships, with one another. It is this type of interaction that helps people maintain their sanity. Perhaps if more people attempted to be friendly we wouldn't have the disagreements between societies and nations that we do. If more people were willing to understand and cooperate with one another our society might be more unified, rather than so egocentric.

The Bell Curve and marks are a big issue in

University, but they are not the main issue. The purpose of going to University is to educate oneself, thus, learn in a variety of ways. A person can gain knowledge through a friend and the experience can be satisfying for both people.

Getting good marks is a bonus to learning but it is not everything. Good marks will not there to support you in a time of crisis, sorrow or loneliness; they don't allow you to talk problems over with them. Good marks don't smile with you when you are happy. Good marks alone will not guarantee you a job; personality and experience can be as big an influence (or more) as marks at a job interview.

If good marks are all you want out of life—fine, but if you want continuous learning, indulge in the experience of friendship, and experience new things. University is not the only place to learn, or make your mark in life.

D. Hook

And more friends

I must, in the strongest possible terms, disagree with Jim Stinert's article "No Friends" (Oct. 7, 1987 Gateway). This is my first year of "University." However, I did have the fortunate and rewarding opportunity to attend, for three years prior to my enrollment here at the U of A, a public college also located in Alberta. I give thanks that there are no one (that I know of) with Mr. Stinert's opinion at that college.

While at that small college in Alberta I did meet new friends, experience new things, AND received "good marks" for my academic efforts. Friendly people (not naive) were most abundant where I came from. It just so happens that my "new" friends will be good friends for the rest of my life. I also experienced "new things" which have, in some cases, accounted for a larger portion of my education than sitting in classrooms trying to get "good marks". I became involved with the student paper, Students' Association, and other interesting endeavours which made my time in college most rewarding. Oh yes, I also received "good marks" even though I made new friends and experienced new things. Yes Mr. Stinert, it can be accomplished!

"The more heads you step on" Mr. Stinert, does not necessarily allow one "to get to the top of that (Bell) curve." I believe it is better to observe, interact and try to understand what goes on inside those heads which allows one to "get to the top", not only of the

curve but, also in life. Stepping on heads only causes headaches, whereas probing the minds of others results in learning.

Back to this "friend" business. I'm sure that poor girl in high school who is not your friend has good reason to choose not to be so. You must have been a real hit with your high school classmates, Mr. Stinert! Secondly, what does asking "So did you study for the test last night?" imply about asking for help? Perhaps, out of genuine concern (believe it or not there are those who care), your "pal" beside you is wondering if you need help (which I'm convinced you do). You, Mr. Stinert, are the naive one.

As to this controversy of borrowing notes. I agree it is a touchy situation. Granted, an individual not willing to attend class does not deserve to benefit from another's diligent attendance. However, circumstances do arise where it's just not possible to attend a class. For a legitimate reason, I would gladly lend my notes to a fellow, hard-working classmate. Once again, the notes one accumulates in his university career are sacred and should be considered as such. Therefore one should lend them with discretion.

So, in light of the preceding comments Mr. Stinert, your article's final paragraph should read:

"And remember kids, university IS about making friends, experiencing new things, and about getting good marks, and that's not all."

If the purpose of your article was to generate concern and feed-back then I congratulate you Mr. Stinert for a job well done. If, on the other hand, it shows how you sincerely feel towards those new students beginning their university career, then I feel pity and shame for your plight here at the U of A. I disagree with what you have written but, as to the purpose of your article (generating feedback and awareness) — I am impressed, it hit my "speak what you feel" mechanism.

R.G. Poole
P.S. Please remember Mr. Stinert: "There are no strangers here, just friends we have not yet met."

Even more friends

This is to all first-year students in regards to Jim Stinert's letter in the October 6 Gateway. Don't believe everything you read. I've been around long enough to know better.

I agree that marks are important, but you don't have to become anti-social because of it. Some hermits do no better on their exams

than some party animals. It would be far wiser to find the fine line between socializing and studying in peace.

If you're having problems with a course, you can go to your prof., but you have to remember that they don't always have the time to help you. They've got two or three other courses to teach besides yours. So who better to turn to than your fellow classmates for help? You can solve most problems together. The more you talk to fellow class-mates, the better you'll understand the material being covered in class. And just think of the great networking system you'll be developing! This will be of great benefit when you're out looking for a job after graduation.

Don't cut off your social life completely because of marks. You may be sorry in the end that you did.

Nancy M. Thormann

The 51st state.

Attention Canada! An American secret agent has infiltrated our federal political system and has become Prime Minister. What other reason could explain why Brian Mulroney is handing our country over to the Americans?

Free trade may offer a number of things like jobs, and lower consumer prices but these are only short term benefits. The long term effect of free trade will be the "Americanization" of all Canadians.

Canadian industries will be crippled which will weaken our economy while it strengthens the American economy. The Canadian farming industry for example is hard hit now. Free trade will allow a surplus of cheap food from the U.S. into the Canadian markets. Canadian farmers will go bankrupt trying to compete against this surplus.

The collapse of this and other key industries will signal the collapse of Canada as a nation. Our country will be the puppet with Uncle Sam pulling the strings. Canada's social, economic, and political systems will be radically changed to meet the needs and wants of Americans.

The time has come for all Canadians to stand up and voice their opinion. Free trade affects all Canadians and is an issue that should be settled by all Canadians.

For if we choose to continue sitting back like we have, we may wake up one day to discover we no longer live in Canada, but in the 51st state.

D. Schrepi

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