Point / Counter-Point

Immediate College Equals More Freedom and Opportunities

Kristen Wehling
Feature Editor

Good-bye Mom and Dad, hello college! Imagine your parents dropping you off at college, helping you unpack, and giving you a big hug while telling you how grown up you are and that they'll miss you. A few minutes later they leave and you are all on your own for the first time in your life. Most high school seniors can't wait for this day. What freedom, what joy!

Going to college right after high school has its many benefits, including getting away from over-bearing parents, experiencing a dose of real-life for the first time, living alone, and having the freedom to choose who you hang out with or when, all at the same time as working toward a higher education. Making the decision to attend college right after high school is a smart move and is beneficial.

Just think, for the first time you won't have your mom saying, "Honey, you have to clean up your room before you hang out with Billy." Not having your parents around allows for much more freedom. No longer will you have to wake up at 6:30 in the morning so that you can have a nutritious breakfast prepared by your parents before going to school when all you really want is an apple. Now you can wake up at 10:30 in the morning, grab a banana and your backpack, and head to your 11:00 class in your pajamas.

If you choose not to attend college right away and decide to stay home and work for a little bit to earn some extra cash, will you really be able to tolerate another year of annoying parents and fighting with your siblings? I can imagine that this thought may be irksome to most students thinking about life after high school.

College offers opportunities to expand your mind and learn about something interesting. At many colleges and universities, classes on a wide variety of subjects are offered. Were you ever interested in learning more about the origins of human beings? There is a class for that. Art in foreign films? There's a class for that. Maybe you were curious at one point about the anatomy of mystical creatures? There may possibly be a class for that as well.

In college you can take many electives that cover a variety of material. Anything that you may find interesting you have the opportunity to learn about.

Those who hope to succeed and want a shot at a good job in life will have to attend college at one point or another. It is better to get college over with in order to open the door for more opportunities. Those who decide to take a year off may forget many math and language skills that they may have to apply in classes at the university level. We forget enough of our schooling over the summer as it is, so why add to this loss?

For those who are hesitant to start college at a large university, attending community college in the fall is a better option. It helps to adjust to college life and become accustomed to the expected course work while remaining at home and not spending loads of cash.

So go, be free, broaden your horizons and attend college right after high school. You won't forget as much as you could if you decided on taking a year off, and you will be able to enter the work force faster, which translates to money and independence.

Time Off Allows For Growth and Learning

Rudi Burns
Staff Writer

As graduation approaches and people start leaving to college there will inevitably be people that decide not to go straight to college. Instead they will choose to take a year off and relax, work, or travel. Regardless of what people decide to do with the time between high school and college and how long this time ends up being, it is important to note that this may be one of the only times available to do exactly what you want, with no restraints. As a graduated high school student you have no college debts, little or no responsibilities, and all the time in the world.

A break between high school and college is the deep breath before the dive that is the rest of your life. It can give you perspective, and allow you to adapt first to being an independent adult, and then decide the direction of the rest of your life. This year of relaxing and work might only prove that, yes, a bachelor's degree is necessary. Perhaps, with a little luck, you may get a taste of a field that you want to learn more about at which point the importance of an education may be made evident. Or it could show you that actually, you are ready to move directly into an apprenticeship with a professional.

Time off can also combat a common problem associated with moving on to college, the "orientation week wild out". This is referring to the wild feeling of freedom that many college students experience the first week of college. Released from the leash of responsibility applied by living in their parent's house, some students focus very little on their college education.

Instead they go to every party on the block, and end up flunking out of college, wasting their time and money. If this person had a year off to work and support themselves, the importance of balancing work and fun would quickly be learned.

Without the added burden of applying to college during senior year, people choosing to take a year off will also have more time to focus on school work. A course of study and major can be decided later, and an appropriate college can be chosen much better with improved self knowledge gained from a year off. In relation to an entire life span one year is relatively insignificant. But to an eighteen-year-old, that year can be a life changing experience. Much can be learned independently in a year of work or travel.

This year can also give you a distinct advantage over the competition. When putting in applications, the junior year will be the main source for information for your college of choice. This is necessary due to the cut-off dates for applications. However, it is a waste of time and energy to have a fourth of your high school education hanging in limbo. Waiting a year allows the colleges to consider your senior year as part of the equation.

For me, taking time off after high school means allowing me to reconnect with my roots. A year spent in the Finnish military will give me skills that I can use for the rest of my life, and will also give me an opportunity to fully master my native tongue. I also hope to gain a different perspective by immersing myself in a different culture, bringing different ideas to the table when I return for my college degree.

Regardless of what you do with the years after high school, be aware of your options and focus on the future.

Slowing Down in a Fast World

Rudi Burns
Staff Writer

Our world is becoming more fast paced and petty by the minute. Every time I look up from my own life to examine the real world, it seems the topic of the day is a smaller iPod, Angelina Jolie's new partner, or my country's new war. It's not that I'm fundamentally against democratizing an oppressed country, or Jolie switching partners. It just seems the emphasis is being placed in all the wrong places at such a critical time.

When I watch the news or read a magazine, it seems one topic always comes up; competition. China pours more poisonous gases and Carbon Dioxide into the atmosphere and water everyday, and America continues to rely heavily on military spending to fuel our economy, all for the sake of "keeping up" with the rest of the world. And the people happily accept the bad, because it brings them a shiny new gadget, or lets them see their favorite celebrity failing.

In a time when unity may be the only thing that saves us, we find ourselves trapped in the "us against them" mentality that inevitably leads to conflict, and eventually to war. It seems we are not learning from our past mistakes, as Palestinians erect a wall reminiscent of the division we created in a 1950's Berlin. This difficulty of living with people of different values and opinions has been highlighted repeatedly since the beginning of time. What still seems elusive is the source of conflict.

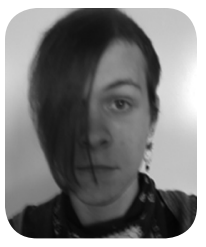
Our basic human need to be better and more powerful than the next man is slowly decaying the very moral fibers that we say hold our world together. We are still bickering over lists of values based on religions and traditions with roots too far back to apply to a modern world. We can all agree on basic things; don't steal, don't lie, don't cheat, be faithful to what you believe. Yet we fight, and kill to prove to others that we are right.

We are approaching an energy crisis and possible a food shortage within our lifetime, which some countries are already experiencing. Historically, countries band together in times of war and trouble. This time the trouble is ours to share, and the war is against the problems our civilization as a whole have created. Instead of each nation attempting to chisel away a small part of our world's problems, we should join our resources together and confront them head on. The earth will not wait for us to sort out our problems, and the sooner we get our act together, the better off we will be.

We need to stop thinking of countries as small self sufficient amoebas separate from the rest of our species. Instead, we should think of ourselves as a blood cell that is pumping though the much larger more important organism that is humanity. The health of the blood is just as critical as the health of the body. After all, one can't live without the other.

Selective Isolationism Perpetuates War

Sean Stoto
A&E Editor



It's a conflict that has been going on since 2003; it has left hundreds of thousands dead and millions more displaced. Some are calling it a civil war. Some are calling it genocide.

No, this isn't the United States' occupation of Iraq. In fact, the US has very little to absolutely no involvement with this crisis. The crisis I speak of has garnered a lot of civilian attention, but absolutely none from our government.

This is the war in Darfur. Rooted in the structural differences and inequalities between central areas of Africa, such as those around the Nile, and the outskirts areas, such as Darfur, the war is one woven of many causes. The war officially started with an accusation from two rebel groups, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), who declared that their government was oppressing the non-Arab population.

The crisis is well-known. Peace advocates worldwide have been raising fusses for years, trying desperately to get their government's attention. Corporate America has even bought into this, giving small portions of their income to charities in an attempt to either raise awareness of the situation, directly help the situation, or boost their sales (the motivation is questionable).

But what has our government done? Absolutely nothing. It seems almost as if the US government is avoiding the cause. If anything, we have hindered more than helped, and we know this.

The lead supplier of weapons to the warring factions is China. In fact, 90% of the light weapons used come from China. There have been claims that China is involving itself with the incident exclusively to facilitate the extraction of African oil.

PetroChina, the national petroleum company, has extensive investments in Sudan. It's a money-maker, no doubt, and when such a steady, rich income is present morals usually take a back seat.

Yet we, the American people, the American government, still buy products from China, doing nothing to stop them from airing the flames of war. The US could easily establish a taxation on all imported goods from China. Given time, we could stop importing their goods altogether. We don't, though. We are allowing this to happen.

Not only are we continuing our trade with this nation, we are also allowing them free trade, while we still pay a large tax on goods we import from China. We currently have a debt to China that ranks in the billions of dollars. Not only are we offering no aid to the Darfur, we are perpetuating the genocide.

We have the capability to help halt this crisis. The US needs to use what influence they have in the United Nations to call for an intervention. If we ignore this any longer, the death toll will be on the same scale as that of Rwanda. We need to get over our ideology of selective isolationism and realize that there is more to the world than public relations and foreign oil. We need to realize this and help to end the Darfur Genocide.

Props

- **Scholarships-** Now we college students won't leave school in debt!
- **Rudi/Howard Announcements-** Admit it- they entertain you- and Rudi took a bite out of a full pineapple!
- **The NHS Blood Drive-** What can be more rewarding than taking three hours out of your day to save three lives?
- **Prom NOT at LN-** As long as it's not in the cafeteria we're happy.

Stops

- **Littering-** Our nation's highways would look so much better without all that garbage.
- **Strange Smells in the Cafeteria-** What is that smell? Chicken, fish, the boy's bathroom!?
- **Illegally drinking and driving-**Just don't do it.
- **Wearing Leggings without anything over-** Could you not find your pants this morning?

#1 Stop: Potholes

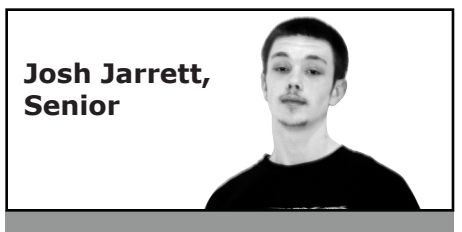
Now that Spring is here, driving down the street is like riding a roller coaster! Here's what LN students and staff have to say:

"If I'm not looking, I might run over one. We need more money to fix them!"

-Philip Cragin, senior

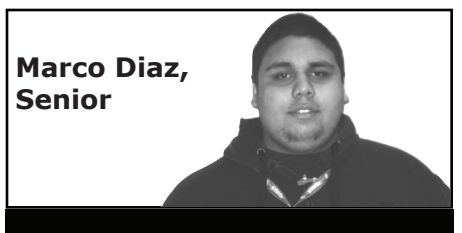
"I think they're irritating and annoying."

-Lani Ciluffo, English Teacher



Josh Jarrett, Senior

"Don't slack off and do your homework."



Marco Diaz, Senior

"Get used to getting out of your boundaries because you won't have them next year."

Domonique Johnson, Sophomore

"Be ready for longer classes."

Kelsey Klug, Senior

"Have fun and get good grades at the same time."