

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Re: What's in a College Credit by Dallen H.

What an interesting, and embarrassing, issue for me to think about! The term had become so colloquial that I had never stopped to wonder why they were even called “credit hours,” much less why I needed 120 of them to graduate! The idea that the credit hour has, apparently, been an arbitrary measure of accomplishment is disturbing. The idea that the current plan by the Department of Education to perpetuate the measure of a “butt in a chair,” with their only “solution” being a standardizing of what constitutes “butt,” and “chair.”

So, back to me. Why didn't I, as the primary participant in this thing called “education,” care to inquire, or even think about the word combination(!), of what a credit hour meant on my way to attaining a “degree?” (I have degree in quotes because now I'm forced to wonder what that even means! Oh, fragile reality!). Since I don't have much control over the definition, and regulations, that the Department of Education decide about, I will share my insights about myself, and my ignorance.

I am a non-traditional student, I am 30, and hadn't been to school for over a decade. What I did “know” was that higher education was going to be a mecca for me. I knew that I would learn. I knew that I could remain curious and my intellectual superiors (or knowledge superiors) would engage in my thinking instead of being dismissive. I knew that there was help available when/if I needed it. What I didn't know is that higher education would guarantee me anything, except learning. This one thought of what I didn't know, more than any of the others, has guided me through my college career. Freed from the bondage of pursuing a degree that would earn me money, I pursued classes that I wanted to take, engaged with teachers and students whom I found interesting, not who shared my major or social ties. In this journey, I found my

passion, and am pursuing it. I have a 6 month, 3, 5, and 10 year plan(s). I am (semi) secure in my prospects at not starving to death in the future and doing what I want to do, not what I have to do. So, because there was no yellow brick road to financial security (I call it “bags of money in my eyes”), I was able to take advantage of education for education's sake. It was this same thinking that left me to disregard the specifics, as folly or success, that didn't “matter” to me. I was in no rush to “get” anywhere, so the 120 “credit hour” requirement was arbitrary. What I did do along the way (thus far of course) is pursue, vehemently, any sources that aided to answer the questions I did have (i.e. what's the Honors program? What's a major/minor? Do I need one/both? Why can't I just take all generals, 120 credits of everything and anything?). I had no fear of confrontation in being wrong or uncomfortable. I had 12 years of “education” after high school (much of it horrible) to prove to me that education was important, I didn't feel much shame.

My (becoming less so in our culture) unique situation aided me to overcome the obsession with graduation and what degrees earn what and focus on what I was learning and why I wanted to be learning it. To be able to re-impassion the college students of today (we've all been stimulated by something we've learned) into truly pursuing whatever it is they want to pursue, I believe, is an integral part of communicating to the “business” of today's colleges and universities exactly what it is their “customers” want from them. The girl who's ho-hum about Twilight isn't the demographic for the studios to gauge advertising off of. The girl who's passionate but acts ho-hum is that exact same girl to the studio. If we create a comfort zone for students to become passionate in, the “studios” will gauge their “advertising” to fit our needs.