

► We'll be presenting a daring new initiative to reduce waste, odor pollution, and expenses with potty training.

Wednesday, June 17, 1998

VIEWPOINTS

The Gamecock

QUOTE, UNQUOTE

"The first five years of the 90's were not very supportive of higher education."

Dr. John Palms

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The Gamecock

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TAKE OUR WORD

Lancaster's actions not becoming to USC

As most know, the USC-Lancaster's Masters of Education program has been in hot water in the past few months.

Degrees have been handed out like candy, and there is nothing anyone can do about the 1,000

plus master degrees earned with money instead of hard work.

Yes, we should be embarrassed about the negative attention the Lancaster satellite brings to USC. Hopefully, the attention drawn will help this university look over all of the programs offered across the state.

But it also gives us an opportunity to ask the administration, "How in the world could something this big be overlooked? Is anyone in charge here?"

This situation affects the students on this campus because it cheapens the value of our USC degrees.

There is the possibility that a stigma, not only of easy work but of underhanded dealings, will be attached to a master's degree from the education department, all caused by this Lancaster incident.

Employers will think a USC graduate hasn't worked as hard for his or her degree and might even think the graduate knowingly cheated.

We are not suggesting that this is an isolated incident, though, as much as we would like to.

Unfortunately, the education

PROBLEM

Teachers getting degrees with checkbooks instead of textbooks.

SOLUTION

Stop the problem before a degree from USC becomes worthless.

department suffers from a lack of organization. It's very difficult to find out who is in charge of any given program, and the rules for said programs often change without notice (and, seemingly, without rea-

son.) So something is seriously wrong with their system.

However, for a program to continue like the Lancaster program has is an absolute disgrace. If they are not going to live up to USC standards, then maybe USC should sever the ties with such an institution.

According to *The State* newspaper, the professor in charge of this scam was allowed to retire, and USC officials have decided to honor the degrees awarded in this program.

Obviously, USC needs to re-evaluate their decision and brush up on their reading. The Carolinian Creed comes into mind.

To preserve its reputation and the value of the degrees of its graduates, the education department needs to get its act together.

Yet, the blame can't lay solely on the department itself. The university needs to anti-up the standards of each and every department in the USC system.

We pay to get a quality education at USC and as students we should demand that. How come that wasn't done in Lancaster?



<http://www.grimmy.com>

college press EXCHANGE

TIPS has student fighting for life

Richard M. Gregg

Columnist

Recently, the USC administration (motto: less schooling for more bucks) announced that in the future all grades will be reported electronically. The reasoning behind this move is to lead the school into the 21st century. So naturally, the school uses a system that would make two tin cups connected by a string seem advanced. Of course I'm talking about TIPS, which stands for Totally Inept Pea-brained System.

Now I don't know if receiving your grades solely through TIPS worries any of you but it sure scares the s— out of me.

Anyone who has dealt with TIPS knows that it is not the most reliable system in the world.

It also has the uncanny ability to crash when I'm just about to finish registration for the next semester. One time (and I am not making this up) it would not let me register for a mandatory first year graduate class that could not be closed, except in the little fantasy world that it operates in. When I tried to find a human at USC to help me out, the general response I received was "Huh?"

Instead, the computer decided to pick my classes for me, and my schedule ended up including Yak Herding 236 and Intro to Custodial Services 101. Now while no one has more admiration for the yak than I do, this seemed to be a bit off of my major (unless I transferred to USC-

South Yemen, where the Yak is a God second only to Tiger Woods).

Of course, half of the time, I can't even get past the 3,816 security questions so as to access TIPS in the first place. As a matter of fact, Fort Knox doesn't contain as many security measures as this baby.

A recent attempt produced the following conversation: TIPS: "Welcome to TIPS. Please enter your nine-digit security code." Me: "O.K." (Enters the number). TIPS: "Please enter your secret ID code." Me: "Let me check on my underwear band" (my mom always taught me to put all crucial info on it. Enters the number). TIPS: "Please enter the cube root of 5843." Me: "What? Where is my calculator?" (After searching frantically, I find it and enter the number). TIPS: "You forgot to put it in the form of a question. All of your information will now be deleted. Have a nice day." Me: "Arrrrrrgh" (as I slump to the floor, sobbing hysterically.)

For those students who are feeling particularly adventurous, there is TIPS on-line or, as it's better known, the web pages from hell.

I say this with the knowledge that if Beelzebub ever got his hands on me (which is almost a certainty), he would subject me to trying to navigate these pages for eternity, while blaring Barry Manilow tunes in my ears.

Or possibly Kenny G. Anyway, my one experience at the computer keyboard yielded me 45 minutes of frustration, permanent high blood pres-

sure and several hundred dollars of therapy bills.

I was simply trying to find out what my final exam schedule looked like for the spring semester. After going everywhere from The School of Spam Preparation to the sign-up for intramural professional wrestling, I finally reached the exam schedule page where (and I swear I am not making this up) it showed every one of my finals occurring on the same day at the same time.

Luckily, the paramedics reached me in time and got my heart pumping and my doctor said that I can start eating Jell-O again soon.

As you have probably surmised by now, my experiences with TIPS has been less than stellar. Ok, so they have stunk. This is why I have decided to start the quash-TIPS movement (or Q-Tips, for short).

Let's head off those inevitable Rs and Ls that we students will be sure to get if TIPS is the sole provider of grades. Write to me in care of The Gamecock and add your voice to the growing mountain of discontent festering on campus.

All right, so I'm the only one festering right now, but I know that there are others beside myself who would like to see a rogue computer repairman chop off TIPS' floppys. Join me in this quest for purity and righteousness. Only, this will have to wait until I get back from the yak-mating season in Nepal.



The Gamecock

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