

# Life is only getting tougher for college students

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It is no secret that our society is increasing the demand for a college education, as more and more people are going to college each year in hopes of making a better life for themselves. The main purpose to go to college is to expand the minds of students and to offer them the knowledge to attain good, quality jobs that they could not have received without a degree. The blame for expensive university costs can be spread among a handful of subjects, but political cartoonist Jeff Parker's "Higher Education" places the blame on the public universities themselves.

In this cartoon, various rhetorical strategies are used to show the cartoonist's opinion of universities increasing the already large financial burden of higher education. The cartoon hints that colleges and universities are to blame for raising tuition costs by showing a student standing on top of a mound of debt trying to reach a degree that is being pulled away from him.

The political cartoon suggests public university students are subject to the discretion and motives of the university itself by oversimplifying the university's effect on rising tuition costs and budget cuts, which represents a growing concern the author has for the future. The towering stack of student loans that the student is standing on represents all the money the student has already given to the university. The stacked file folders do not appear to be a concern for the university anymore since they have their money and just want a little more.

This use of imagery emphasizes what the student has already given a lot more than he has to give. The clouds in the background shows how high the stack is and again emphasizes the already huge amount of debt a typical college acquires. This is probably a college student who is almost done with

school, but has a couple more classes required to get his degree. The cartoonist does not show the scholarships that the student could have received. In this cartoon, colleges and universities are represented by a suit sleeve labeled “ Budget Cuts And Rising Tuition” that is dangling its hand out with a degree in front of a college student.

The institution appears to have all the power in this picture because it is holding the degree while the college student struggles to grab it. When drawing up this political cartoon, Jeff Parker probably did not have one audience in mind, but wanted to emphasize the problems with higher education in our society. The cartoon depicts the struggle of a college student trying to attain that coveted degree, doing whatever it takes financially to get there. Many college students know the struggles of college and the tough road of not only expanding your mind and learning new things, but of also finding ways to pay for this.

College is not cheap, so Jeff Parker was trying to reach out to the people affected by rising tuition costs and budget cuts at public universities. The students and family members of people going to college was the intended audience of this political cartoon. Standing on his tippy toes while reaching up and gritting his teeth, the student’s appearance shows that he is not scared for the future, but rather anxious and ready to be done with school. The arm holding the degree represents the public universities trying to squeeze out as much money as they can.

The quote “ higher...higher...” exaggerates the intentions of the higher education institution of only wanting to take as much money from the student as it can. Institutions are one of the main reasons why costs are

going up, but the author forgets to mention the competition of other schools that makes tuition go up across the board. The cartoon ignores the fact that schools have to remain competitive with other schools by investing tuition money into recreation centers, athletics, faculty and more.

The presence of these extracurricular activities is what drives many students to go to these schools, and in return, all students at the school have to share the burden of this. The cartoonist would have been more effective if he put a stadium of some sort on the ground in the background next to the other buildings. The color scheme and background of the cartoon was strategically set up by the cartoonist showing the college campus with a white background right above it. On campus, you can see two large, upscale buildings sitting next to walking paths, trees and freshly cut grass.

This is a common college campus setting that students ultimately end up having to pay for. Just above that there are clouds that appear to be still far away that emphasizes how much debt students have. The neutral white background did not have any importance on the cartoon except to allow easier visibility of the student, hand, etc. The cartoonist clearly thinks the education institutions are at fault. In this political cartoon, Jeff Parker clearly thinks that public universities are to blame for rising tuition costs.

He uses rhetorical strategies such as color scheme, background, and oversimplified symbols to implement the idea that public universities are the only ones to blame. The hand holding the degree and the student standing on top of loans being the only way the student can get that degree does not show the whole scope of the problem. There are a plethora of scholarships that are given out to students each year from private donors and the

universities themselves that help students with the financial aspect of school. The cartoonist must look at the entire picture when assessing a problem in the higher education system.