

Graduation

Life doesn't have to start right after college

By Sean Flack@iowastatedaily.com

My roommate is engaged to be married. My best friend is buying property. It's my senior year of college and all around me, people who were once doing beer bongs at frat parties are now turning into — gulp — adults.

What am I doing? Sitting in my boxers eating peanut butter out of the jar, thinking that commitment and adulthood are the worst possible things right now. And, you know what? That is completely fine.

At this point in our lives, these things happen. We look for our future. We look for security. Our college days are almost over and people feel the need to start the rest of their lives. But who says life has to start at 22? There's always this pressure that we have to

conform to the accomplishments of our peers. Oh, I'm single; I must be a loser. Oh, I'm jobless; I must be worthless. Oh, I still play video games; I must be a bum.

That kind of thinking is wrong. Don't base your life on what other people are doing. Make your own meaning. That's what life is about.

We're in our 20s. We have an entire decade to mess around.

Hell, we have the rest of our lives to mess around. And messing around doesn't have to be watching marathons of "Top Chef." Messing around can be taking trips, falling in and out of love, being free, finding yourself and realizing what you want out of life.

I realize that adulthood is what some people want. But what I want to get across is that it's all

right to not want the 9-5 job and white picket fence yet.

Every time I come home for some sort of family gathering, one relative will always ask if there's a special girl in my life. That inquiry is followed up with, "So, what do you want to do with your life?"

Women and your career. Women and your career. Wash. Rinse. Repeat. Is that all anyone cares about? It's no wonder people get so bummed out when they see their friends getting married or getting new, fancy jobs. We live in a society where those two concepts are the pinnacle of human success.

And I don't want to be burned out. I love my major and I love women, but I'm afraid that if I throw my everything into those two things right

out of college, then I'm going to wake up one morning in the future and realize that I didn't explore as much as I should have. My dad says there's plenty of time for that in the future. And he's right. These are my 20s: prime playing-video-game-in-my-underwear time.

I say forget the job hunt right after college. Take a month or two off to relax or go someplace you've always wanted. Unlike college, we'll be in some sort of career for the rest of our lives. Do you really want to jump into that right away, or into a lifelong commitment with someone else?

It's cool if you do, but it's also cool if you don't.

Don't worry; you haven't failed. Like they say, not all who wander are lost.

Politics

Student representation can't please everyone

By Rick Hanton@iowastatedaily.com

Before we left for Spring Break, if you recall, there was some controversy about the work done by ISU Ambassadors and students from other Iowa universities to discuss proposed budget cuts to Iowa's Regent universities.

The chairman of the ISU College Republicans, Mr. Logan Pals, asserted that the work by the Ambassadors to lobby representatives to stop the cuts was a partisan move by a supposedly non-partisan organization and was thus improper.

I wrote a column addressing this point, which said the Ambassadors were simply seeking to work in the best interest of ISU students and not trying to lead a lobbying effort that sided with the Republican or Democratic agenda.

Just before break, Mr. Pals responded by noting that he was simply disagreeing with the email the Ambassadors sent out that took a side on the issue of the Regents' budget. This was an action that he perceived to not be non-partisan in nature.

I would like to point you to the Merriam-Webster dictionary's definition of partisan and non-partisan:

Partisan: a firm adherent to a party, faction, cause or person; especially: one exhibiting blind, prejudiced and unreasoning allegiance

Nonpartisan: not partisan; especially: free from party affiliation, bias or designation

As you can see, a group like the ISU Ambassadors can be a non-partisan organization simply by not taking sides with a political party as it lobbies on students' behalf.

There is a distinct discrepancy between the definitions of these two words that allows a non-partisan group to take sides on an issue, as the Ambassadors did, so long as it does not simply throw its support behind any one political party.

In my column before break, I considered Pals' use of the word "partisan" in terms of the non-partisan — or not party-affiliated — stance of the ISU Ambassadors. So if you were to consider the full meaning of the word "partisan," you would see that I was wrong in saying that this was not a partisan issue before Mr. Pals made it one, as the chairman of the ISU Republicans, because the Ambassadors did firmly take one side of the issue. But, this didn't violate their non-partisan position as a group, as strange as that may seem.

As I said before, the ISU Ambassadors simply seek to make the voice of students heard in Iowa government and to give students experience in working with the Legislature. They represent what they believe to be in the best interest of students, and for many students and families, this issue is the affordability of classes at Iowa State.

Pals' second point was that we should lobby the university to drop tuition rates, rather than lobby the Legislature. While this is a good strategy, it is fundamentally flawed. We should be working with both the university and the Legislature to make our education affordable.

Iowa State has gone to great lengths in recent years to lower costs and to keep us from paying extra when tax revenues for the state fell short.

There are still many cost-cutting measures underway, and the university has changed everything from how much energy it uses on nights and weekends to how much it spends on office phones for professors in some departments. Professors have also stepped up and brought in record amounts of research dollars over the past few years to help the university survive a series of budget cuts.

State universities are an important expense for any state, and I worry when budgets for these institutions are being cut at the local and the federal level. This policy shift has been led by the Republican Party, and I oppose the party's view that all taxes are bad and should be eliminated if at all possible.

To explain my view on taxes, I point you to a recent article I read in "Inc." magazine about a Scandinavian entrepreneur's perspective on the extremely high business taxes in Norway. This young entrepreneur's view was that he was paying the government for a series of services that it provides him as a businessman. He pays for a secure state, paved roads, a great state education system and health care for his employees. He said the thousands of dollars he paid for these services was a fair price for the services he enjoyed from the state.

Pals says we're spending money to buy things like high-tech trash cans around campus, but he again points to a failing of the Republican stance on spending. Those trash cans, similar to other things I value on the national level like NASA, are long-term investments.

They may cost \$50,000 today, but they set us up for long-term savings. Jotting some equations on the back of a napkin, I figure that while each of the solar compacting trash bins costs about \$3,500, they will pay for themselves in savings within 8-10 years or fewer because the trash must be collected only one-fifth as often at these cans around campus. We also reduce the carbon emitted by the garbage vehicles that collect the trash.

We've gotten to the point where trimming the university's budget can only involve increasing class sizes and the elimination of some majors and departments.

Like with our national budget, eliminating a few small programs like green trash bins here and there won't help the problem in a measurable way. We either need more money through taxes or different funding allocations, or we need to cut major programs like entire departments at the university.

I agree that some government programs are inefficient and some initiatives are unnecessary, but who do you expect to educate students if the government doesn't provide a basic standard of higher education?

The assertion that the university has not been making big enough budget cuts is uninformed at best and disrespectful to the administration at worst.

I hope those who read the Daily are able to formulate a good opinion on this matter and act on it by speaking with their own representatives, and I thank Mr. Pals for sharing his opinion with the Daily.



Logan Pals, senior in industrial engineering, speaks with Kevin Koester, state representative, at the Regents Day Political Rally in the Des Moines Capitol. File photo: Clark Colby/Iowa State Daily

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