

The College of Unconventional Applied Arts and
Sciences: A Prospectus

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February 6, 2019

Abstract

The plodding rate of change within higher education make it ill-suited to anticipate challenges rapidly looming in government and corporate sectors. This prospectus outlines those challenges and describes a bold solution. If implemented, it would signal a less hidebound, more adroit institution of higher education to better serve students, business, and society, while fostering a new future for higher education.

Keywords: Ethics of Higher Education, Higher Education, Educational Policy, Philosophy of Education

1 Introduction

Two fronts have converged, amplifying their individual effects and redirecting higher education's process and point.

On one front, corporate and business interests, keen to eliminate their own costs in training and apprenticeships, use the lever of justifying the cost of higher education to society to press for the commercialization of higher education in its research mission and its education mission. The former leads to the proliferation of university patent offices and so-called 'business incubators'.¹ Worse, the latter leads to the dilution of the core curriculum and the elimination of traditional humanities and sciences programs in favor of narrowly vocational programs and colleges—Petroleum Engineering over Physics, say, Nursing over English Literature, or Accountancy over Philosophy.²

Vocational justifications for higher education in the US and, increasingly, the UK are strengthened by a further, thus far isolated trend: Governments in the US and the UK have gradually shifted resources away from higher education, by fiat declaring that their citizens ought to view higher education not as a public good, but as the citizens' private good the cost of which must, more or less, be borne by the individual seeking its benefit. The resulting enormity of indebtedness, both individual and collective, is staggering.³ Students and their families, frequently treading stagnant economic waters themselves, make the bet that the cost they must bear in the near term by virtue of their government's diminishing responsibility will in the long run be justified by gaining a career path via corporate utilization of their specific, narrowly trained skills and labor.

Whether considered from the standpoint of the cost to the individual student in the US or the cost to society in the EU, the value of higher education is no longer identified in the intrinsic value of discovery in pure research, study, and reflection in humanities and sciences education. It is now, rather, simply a matter of instrumental credentialing, with university administrations and no few members of its faculty openly promoting the university as such.⁴

"Come to us," we tell our prospective students, "if you want to get a good job and earn lots of money. The costs will have been worth it in the end."

Nor have we lied: Numbers repeatedly bear out that one is much better off in terms of lifetime earnings having undertaken a higher education than not.⁵ In the US and the UK particularly, the promise held out by the corporation has

¹Dave Merrill, Blacki Migliozi, and Susan Decker, "Billions at Stake in University Patent Fights," *Bloomberg*, May 2016, <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2016-university-patents/>.

²Even a field as universally valued as mathematics is contorted to be seen as a 'service' discipline, with special emphasis placed on its utility and the sidelining of pure maths in favor of the applied—viz., mathematical modeling and statistical analysis.

³Tara Siegel Bernard and Karl Russell, "The New Toll of American Student Debt in 3 Charts," *The New York Times*, July 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/11/your-money/student-loan-debt-parents.html>.

⁴Fernanda Zamudio-Suaréz, "Billions at Stake in University Patent Fights," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 2018, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Yes-College-Is-Worth/243450>.

⁵Ibid.

allowed government defunding to continue unabated, occasional student protests notwithstanding.⁶

All that is about to change as a new front looms on the horizon. Recent successes in machine learning algorithms and numerous opportunities for their relatively low-cost deployments predict that corporate managers will soon be hard-pressed to justify hiring old-fashioned—all-too-prone to malfunction, wear-and-tear, and breakage—'humanware' over the installation of specialty hardware needing neither pay nor benefits in exchange for its labor.⁷

The corporate front will thus inevitably abandon its promise, leaving the instrumentally justified university without a point or purpose. Indeed, the inexorable demands of shareholder value make the demise of the corporate promise something of an economic necessity, an imperative of capital interests.

What will happen to our modern vocationally justified, greased, and geared universities as the government, corporate, and automation fronts fully sweep by? It is not the point of this proposal to take issue with their vocational focus, which would be a fool's errand at this late date, but to more wholly embrace it in an attempt to preserve higher education, at least in some form. Let us not, that is to say, lament the coming demise of the modern university without first exploiting to the fullest its instrumental ends.

Some capacities are presently beyond the reach of algorithms and could be forever beyond them, if philosophers are correct: Empathy, theory-of-mind, or generally the recognition that, and understanding by reflection just how *what it is like to be a person* is important to and influences that person is, so far as we know, computationally intractable.⁸ Since there is nothing it is like to be an algorithm, algorithms are utterly impotent to understand, grasp, guess, or conceive in any way any part of the rich subjective experience a person enjoys.

Careers that depend on the apparently uniquely human capacity to conceive what it is like to be another person—however rightly, wrongly, or dimly, as the case may be—in view of themselves enjoying everyday precisely what it is very much like to be *them* will long withstand the automation onslaught, provided of course that consumers insist on authenticity. Thus, careers that depend on our ability to anticipate changes in consciousness and responses to those changes can be expected to weather the automation front nicely, as will careers that essentially incorporate or otherwise involve human-to-human contact and connections of various kinds that hinge on the professionals' empathy, understanding, or theory-of-mind.

Now as it happens—conveniently, for our purposes—entire segments of the marketplace which capitalize on the above human capacities have heretofore been shunned as unsuitable for university education, if not for scholarship, per-

⁶Sean Coughlan, "Students protest against tuition fees," *BBC*, November 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/education-34721681>.

⁷Kevin Drum, "You Will Lose Your Job to a Robot—and Sooner Than You Think," *Mother Jones*, November 2017, <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/10/you-will-lose-your-job-to-a-robot-and-sooner-than-you-think/>.

⁸We may point to neurological bases for our ability—mirror neurons, perhaps—without having the slightest idea what an artificial counterpart might be—a mirror transistor, perhaps?

haps out of fear of being seen as endorsing and enabling them. Yet the markets exist as they have long existed in virtually every society, and the university can no longer afford to ignore them if it proposes to continue being instrumentally viable. Indeed, serving these markets by providing them with skilled graduates bolsters the modern university's relevance to the wider society by trading on traditional university strengths so as to professionalize a number of such socially important, highly valued vocations. There should be little fear of hyperbole in drawing the necessary conclusion: No less than the long-term survival of the modern, instrumentally justified and pitched university is at stake; we cannot afford to miss the kinds of opportunities this proposal seeks to capture.

The upshot is that the survival of the modern university depends on serving the needs of an immediately available and not heretofore exploited range of careers the training for which will be housed within the subject of this proposal: *The College of Unconventional Applied Arts and Sciences*.

2 College Structure

The College of Unconventional Applied Arts and Sciences (CUAAS) will offer two Bachelors of Science and two of Arts through four departments:

The Department of Applied Statistics, Markets, and Gaming Offering the BS, programs include Casino Gaming, Sports Betting and Bookmaking, Computer Gaming Design, and Stock Market Analysis.

The Department of Recreational Pharmacology and Applied Botany Offering the BS, programs include Synthetic Psychopharmacology, Horticulture and Hallucinogens, and Distilling Arts and Mixology.

The Department of Erotic Arts Offering the BA, programs include Erotic Dance, Erotic Literature, Pornography Writing and Production, and Internet Performance.

The Department of Management and Sex Worker Studies Offering the BA, programs include Bordello Management, Mercenary Sex Training, and Escort Services.

Curricular requirements would vary by program but would assume a two-year, 60-hour core curriculum emphasizing basic studies in mathematics, composition, politics, literature, history, philosophy, and the sciences.

3 The Department of Applied Statistics, Markets, and Gaming (ASMG)

Programs in ASMG emphasize the creative development of games of every traditional, individual, collective, competitive, and virtual sort. Coupling current findings in neuroscience under a cognitive-behavioral framework with statistical

analysis and computer modeling, ASMG trains students for successful careers manipulating and capitalizing on neurological rewards systems and proclivities for addiction. Coursework in applied mathematics (statistics and probability) and programming combine with courses in cognitive neuroscience to form the spine of a BS in ASMG. Additional courses in ASMG include

- ASMG 301** Applied Probability and Statistics
- ASMG 311** Statistical Modeling and Data Analysis
- ASMG 321 & 322** Probability and Statistics I & II
- ASMG 331 & 332** Numerical Methods and Modeling I & II
- ASMG 341 & 342** Intermediate Macroeconomics I & II
- ASMG 351** Financial Markets and Institutions
- ASMG 361** Financial Modeling
- ASMG 371** Introduction to Derivative Securities
- ASMG 381** Real Estate Principles
- ASMG 391 & 392** The Neuroscience of Addiction I & II
- ASMG 401 & 402** Bookmaking and Sports-Betting Analysis I & II
- ASMG 411** Market Trend Identification and Manipulation
- ASMG 421** Game Design and Programming
- ASMG 422** Reward Structures in Computer Gaming
- ASMG 431 & 432** Enhanced Casino Gaming Addiction I & II
- ASMG 441** Fantasy Sports Gaming
- ASMG 451 & 452** Games App Design and Attention Resource Management
I & II
- ASMG 461** Large Data-set Predictive Modeling in Stock Market Analysis
- ASMG 471** Greed, Bubbles, and Animal Spirits
- ASMG 481 & 482** Advanced Game Design and Programming I & II
- ASMG 491** Casino Gaming Behavioral Analysis

4 The Department of Recreational Pharmacology and Applied Botany (RPAB)

With a unique emphasis on laboratory research opportunities for undergraduates, RPAB programs focus on the design, development, and use of artificially synthesized and naturally occurring psychoactive substances. Standard courses include basic sequences in chemistry, biochemistry, and organic chemistry, biology studies emphasizing botany and agro-science studies, and current research on the neuroscience of psychoactive substances. RPAB courses include

RPAB 301 Physiological Psychology

RPAB 302 Sensation and Perception

RPAB 311 Drug Use and Abuse

RPAB 321 & 322 Biochemistry I & II

RPAB 331 Plant Form and Function

RPAB 332 Principles of Botany

RPAB 341 The Religious and Cultural Uses of Naturally Occurring Hallucinogens

RPAB 342 Psilocybin Mushrooms from Farm to Table

RPAB 351 & 352 Modern Marijuana Cultivation I & II

RPAB 353 Marijuana Edibles

RPAB 361 & 362 World Drinks, Bartending, and Mixology I & II

RPAB 371 Synthesizing LSD

RPAB 431 & 432 Mastering the Drug Trade in Legal, Decriminalized, and Illegal Environments, I & II

RPAB 441 & 442 Rave Drug Development

RPAB 451 & 452 Distilling I & II

RPAB 461 & 462 Psychonautical Studies I & II

RPAB 471 & 472 Synthesizing Novel Hallucinogens I & II

RPAB 481 Meth, Cocaine, and Heroin, from Third-World Farm to First-World Pharmaceutical

5 The Department of Erotic Performing and Video Arts (EPVA)

Offering the Bachelor of Arts, EPVA programs build on foundational courses in the terpsichorean and theatre arts and applies them to vastly more profitable venues and endeavors. In addition to traditional and interpretive dance courses, choreography, set design, theatre writing and production, EPVA adds a number of courses to train students for newly professionalized careers heretofore only accessible via informal apprenticeships, including

EPVA 301 History of Erotic Art and Pornography

EPVA 302 History of Erotic Stage Performance

EPVA 311 Human Sexuality

EPVA 312 Close Relationships

EPVA 321 Gender Issues in Psychology

EPVA 322 Social Psychology

EPVA 331 & 332 Dance Choreography I & II

EPVA 341 & 342 Media Writing, Set Design, and Production Techniques I & II

EPVA 351 & 352 Stage Sex I & II

EPVA 361 & 362 Erotic Photography Techniques and Lighting I & II

EPVA 371 First Amendment and Ethical Issues in the Media

EPVA 381 Movement for Actors

EPVA 382 Creative Dramatics

EPVA 391 Makeup and Costume Construction

EPVA 392 Voice and Diction

EPVA 401 & 402 Pole Dancing I & II

EPVA 411 & 412 Choreography and Performance in the All-Male Review I & II

EPVA 421 Intermediate Writing for Pornography

EPVA 431 & 432 Live Streaming Performance I & II

EPVA 441 & 442 Pornography Casting, Production, and Distribution I & II

EPVA 451 & 452 Male, Female, and Transgendered Lapdance Styles I & II

EPVA 461 Exotic Pornography from BDSM to Zoophilia

EPVA 471 & 472 Pornography for Women I & II

EPVA 481 & 482 Stage Performance Practicum I & II

EPVA 491 Advanced Pole Dancing

6 The Department of Management and Sex Worker Studies (MSWS)

While other departments within CUAAS exploit opportunities to develop and professionalize careers serving markets which have long been in need of professional standards and disciplinary development, the programs of MSWS build on management and marketing courses common in every college of business, applying them to the oldest of professions thus far culturally shunned, vilified, or, at best, grudgingly ignored. To be sure, minimal adjustment is required to refocus the standard curriculum of the college of business to legitimize and serve this particular, enormously profitable, and growing market. Synergies of this sort are expected but not quite sufficient. That is, MSWS could almost but not entirely be serviced by the college of business. Courses unique to MSWS include,

MSWS 311 History of Prostitution

MSWS 321 Salesmanship: Concepts and Practices

MSWS 322 Advertising and Promotional Strategy

MSWS 331 Principles of Marketing

MSWS 332 Marketing Research and Analytics

MSWS 341 Communicating in Business

MSWS 342 Behavior in Organizations

MSWS 351 & 352 Operations Management I & II

MSWS 361 Legal Environment of Business

MSWS 371 Computer Applications in Business

MSWS 372 Management Information Systems Concepts

MSWS 381 Business Decision Support Systems and Expert Systems

MSWS 391 & 392 Ethical and Legal Issues in Contemporary Sex Work

MSWS 411 & 412 Brothel Management I & II

MSWS 421 & 422 Escort Services Recruitment and Marketing I & II

MSWS 431 Sexual Services Consumer Behavior

MSWS 441 & 442 Sex Worker Self-Management I & II

MSWS 451 & 452 Sex Worker Practicum I & II

MSWS 461 Brothel Human Resources

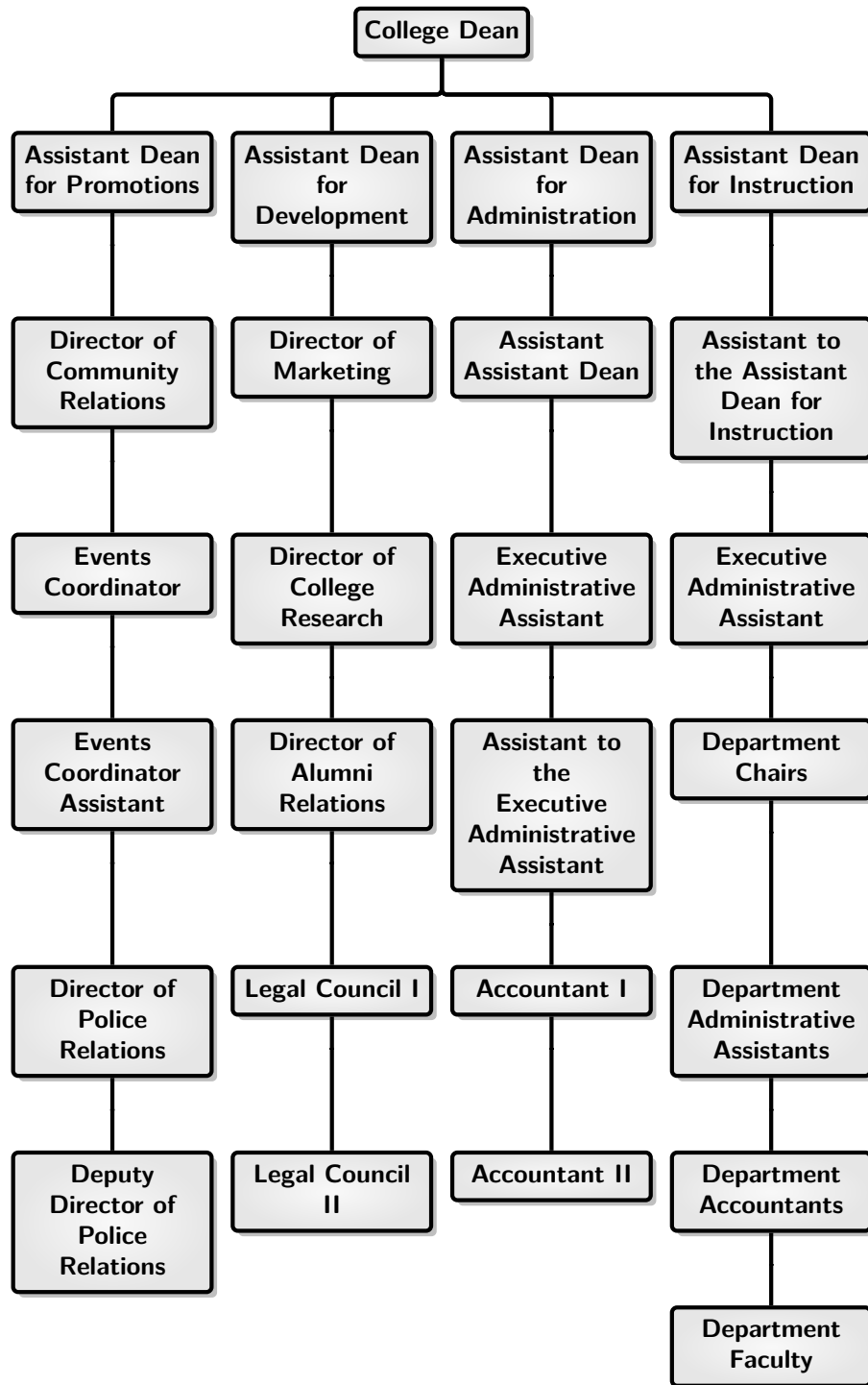
MSWS 471 & 472 Escort Services for High-End Clientele I & II

MSWS 481 Special Brothel Services

MSWS 491 & 492 Senior Thesis I & II: Sex Worker Business Model Development and Innovation

7 College Administration, Faculty, and Staff

As the following organizational charts demonstrate, CUAAS provides rich opportunities for the sort of expansive administrative overburden to which the administrations of more traditional colleges continually aspire. Additionally, the pretense of shared-governance publicly espoused but privately despised in such colleges is finally explicitly eliminated so as to maximize operational efficiencies.



8 Funding

CUAAS employs a novel 'pay it backward' funding model. That is, alumni of the college are contractually obligated to pay a modest %5 of their per annum earnings for twenty years after graduation. Special exceptions may be granted for those pursuing careers in under-served communities or those who abandon the field for which they have trained altogether. College earnings are then used to fully fund the college and its current students' fees and tuition, making it feasible to recruit students from diverse economic backgrounds.

Consequently, CUAAS has considerable 'skin in the game' as to the professional success of its graduates, a positive feature of this funding scheme inasmuch as it encourages the college's long-term commitment to its graduates' success in their chosen professional fields. Indeed, keenly aware of the tight connection between their own fortunes and alumni career success, college administrators are expected to take an active role in facilitating and guiding alumni careers. Working closely with Collections Officers, a team of Career Coordinators monitors alumni career choices, helping to guide them in the most advantageous ways possible while alerting them to any pitfalls, legal and otherwise, they may encounter on their way to leading socially useful and highly productive careers.

In light of the number of necessary administrative positions and high pay rates anticipated to attract top-quality candidates, CUAAS boldly and finally eliminates the hidebound institutional practice of conferring tenure protections on its faculty in favor of yearly renewable contracts. CUAAS thereby ensures a compliant, cooperative, and flexible faculty workforce by following, to its natural end, the model traditional colleges have developed of employing adjunct faculty to meet much of their instructional commitments to student-customers. Apart from administrator positions, CUAAS obtains an enviable elasticity of expenses which can respond quickly to broader economic challenges as they may be encountered. The funding model is thus seen as setting an example for the entirety of the educational industrial complex, wholly embracing its role in unleashing the full power of the capitalist instinct while daringly aligning its operations thereupon.

9 Future Growth

Several factors combine to ensure strong growth in the foreseeable future for the CUAAS:

- Heretofore marginalized (at best) and frequently illegal (at worst) occupations are professionalized with the highest standards of professional conduct, both in terms of technical skill as professionals and in terms of abiding by the ethical standards of professionals serving diverse clientèle, thereby promoting the professions so as to achieve widespread societal acceptance.
- Successful social movements favoring prostitution, drug, and gambling

decriminalization or outright legalization signal the readiness of governments to obtain new sources of tax revenue, create corporate opportunities aplenty, and identify a significant vacuum of trained, credentialed professionals to meet growing demand.

- Having identified and fully exploited a vast market opportunity for the modern vocationally justified institution of higher education, the CUAAS has the advantage of a significant head start over competing institutions in building its brand, commanding alumni loyalty, and garnering public and corporate support.
- Institutions seeking to emulate the success of the CUAAS answer to boards of trustees populated by staid members of the community accustomed to two and three-tiered markets: Traditionally recognized markets and professions, gray markets, and black markets. Since these stratified markets reinforce and circularly legitimize trustees' blinkered moral proclivities, other, less enlightened institutions of higher education which might seek to offer competition are likely to be rebuffed in their efforts, leaving the CUAAS the sole dominant player in the new field of the unconventional applied arts and sciences.
- The deployment of AI-driven automation systems, from the dramatic and visible (autonomous vehicles and general-purpose, teachable robots) to the subtle and less-blatant, yet nevertheless far more pervasive (accountancy systems, medical diagnostics and pathology, legal-discovery, translation services, logistics, and so on) significantly dims, if not extinguishes entirely, the point of study in vocationally justified colleges. Disaffected students, desperately searching for alternatives, will happily seize on the opportunity the CUAAS presents for careers in fields largely immune to automation.

10 Postscript

To be sure, this proposal is satire.

My efforts to create a rigorous honors program—a 'classical-university-within-the-university'—at my home institution were firmly rebuffed by an administration which saw no need for instructional support for what in their view ought to be little more than another credentialing opportunity. Satirizing a modern, wholly vocationally-justified university which is forever behind the curve chasing new markets for 'customer' employment while suffering an overburden of highly-paid administrators busily collecting metrics of vanishing importance seemed fair game at first, if only as a way of venting frustration.

Yet arts and humanities programs really are being shuttered because, well, what are you going to do with that? Mathematics programs cling to application and service to other, more useful-read, 'more employable'—degrees in business and engineering; physics programs are cut or subsumed into more viable-read,

'more profitable'—sciences. Uninspired students, working full-time, mortgage their futures desperately seeking a toehold onto the sinking middle-class life-raft by mustering tepid enthusiasm for some career or other, slouching from class to class when they manage to attend at all.

At times therapeutic and, hopefully, entertaining, satire is above all argument. The *reductio ad absurdum* on the vocational justification for higher education this satire portrays presumes that there exist 'professions' so thoroughly morally objectionable that even administrators utterly entranced by the shiny object of vocationalism would blanch at the proposal. Assassination academies, colleges of corruption, and departments of despotism are simply beyond the moral pale so long as modern higher education stumbles, zombie-like, on the path of cultivating students' intellectual and moral virtues set for it by its ancient and medieval (qua religious institution) progenitors.

The danger is this: One person's intended *reductio* is another person's obvious deduction if the conclusion be not summarily rejected. Having written this proposal, I am no longer as convinced as when I began that vices conceived as such in Victorian times—gambling, recreational drugs, prostitution, and pornography, say—are any less deserving of training and professionalism than marketing, management, investment, or market analysis. We might just be in for a penny, in for a pound.

Certainly, those captivated by images of higher education as solely an instrumental good will embrace the conclusion, favor something resembling the College of Unconventional Arts and Sciences, and blithely perceive no satire in its proposal whatsoever.

Which is frightening enough, in a disconcerting, queasy-making way, especially for those of us who hold on to the quaint notion of higher education as an intrinsic good, sought by students in an open society (regardless of where it might ultimately lead them) so they may eagerly press questions whose importance derives not in the slightest from the extent to which any answers might be monetized.

It may be that I have swallowed too much of my own satire. Yet those of us who are committed to higher education insofar as it is an intrinsic good have long since made our peace with the fact that higher education *also* has instrumental ends for most of those committed to its success—students, faculty, and administrators alike. We are even (mostly) okay with higher education's intrinsic value taking a back seat to its instrumental ends, so long as it is not abandoned altogether as is so often the case in 'for-profit', 'online-only' so-called higher education. Our discomfort, in short, hardly justifies serving some professions and not others.

Really, though, the funding model I propose above has got to go: Whatever else one might think, universities shouldn't be in the business of literally pimping out their alumni.

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