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Governor Rick Perry has a plan to lower the continually rising cost of college education. He has stated that \$10,000 will be the cap on a four year bachelors degree. I feel that this is a nice idea and will look good on paper, but I do not feel it is an advisable task. The reasons I do not feel it will work or be able to be executed are; the quality of education could be compromised, face-to-face teaching will lesson and expectations will not be fulfilled.

If all bachelor degrees were the same cost, it would mean everyone should be receiving the same or comparable education. This cannot work. An education at Harvard is not equivalent to that of a community college. Although, some may argue that people are paying for a name in the reputation of the school, instead of the quality of education, but reputations usually proceed themselves. Anthony P Carnvale writes in his article "Just a Start", "in a world where there are \$10,000 degrees at Rick Perry University and \$240,000 degrees at Harvard, we know who will go where". This can be open ended quote, but it is usual that graduates with a degree from Harvard will get a better job than ones with a degree from Rick Perry University. As well as a better job, will be able to find employment easier after graduation. Many institutions pride themselves on their admissions process and try to bring in the best, most well rounded students to their universities. "The researchers suggest that this attempt to build prestige by "cream skimming" the student market does not lead to an improvement in the quality of education delivery" says Professor David D. Dill in his paper "The Public Good, the Public Interest, and the Public Higher Education" (Dill, p. 6). Even though there is research saying weeding out admissions does not make a difference, schools will continue to do it. It is the competition to say your respective school brings in the best students, the "high ability students" (Dill, p. 6), says

Dill. If the government were to dictate the cost of each school, the prestige, tradition and quality of education would be altered and compromised.

One of the solutions to lowering education cost was to put more classes online and encourage online degrees. In Gaye Tuchman's article, "You get what you pay for", she argues "when [online classes are] done properly in relatively small classes, it does not save much money". Online courses take a lot of time to prepare, facilitate and manage. There are no counted classroom hours with an online course, but this can in turn give the professors teaching the course an endless work load with no definitive time allotment. Martha O'Connell agrees with Gaye saying "The value of great teachers, advisers and mentors, even in an online format, and the costs associated with supporting and retaining them cannot be underestimated, especially in consideration of the return on the investment in what should be an education for a lifetime", in her article "Investing in Human Resources". Online education has given me the opportunity to get a Master's Degree while having a full time job and starting a family. If it were not for online classes, I would not have been able to accomplish this feat. As much praise as I give online learning, I do miss the elements the classroom brings. As online learners, we lose benefits of learning face-to-face. Sean Decatur writes, "There are essential components of an undergraduate experience that cannot be replaced by an iTunes store. Hands-on experiences in laboratories and studios – precisely the skills required by jobs in technology or allied-health fields, for example – require physical facilities, supplies, and supervision, all with real costs that can be reduced only so much" in his article "Education on iTunes". Decatur reflects these cost can only be lessened minimally. Dropping education down to \$10,000 is drastic and classroom learning would be affected. Online learning is not the easy solutions to pay cuts, it too can be pricey.

The third reason I do not believe Perry's plan would work is the high expectations that are presented will not be followed through. If everyone were to get an education for the same cost, there would be equal expectations after graduation and in the work force. Firstly, as D. Bruce Johnstone expresses, "higher education is essential for most good jobs, and the absence of an education beyond high school will be an increasingly formidable barrier to obtaining them; but the mere possession of an advance degree will not guarantee wither good, or lasting employment" in his paper "Financing of Higher Education". There will be individuals that feel because they obtained a high degree they are deserving of a job, this is building false expectations. Luis Fuentes-Rohwer fears that Perry's solution " has the makings of a dual-degree system. Most troubling, there are no assurances that low income and minority students will not be tracked into this lesser option," he explains in his writing "Rhetoric v Texas Reality". Fuentes-Rohwer worries the lower class will be in the same situation they are in now. Johnstone states, "success in college and university remains highly correlated with socioeconomic class" (Johnstone, p. 317). Will the lower class still be left behind if education is an even playing field? There will be unfulfilled expectations if Perry's solution is practiced.

The question is still out why higher education cost so much and why costs continue to go up. We were given vague answers. In David W. Breneman writes in his "Essay on College Cost", "a general quality enhancement is the main explanation for rising cost". More ambiguous answers in this article were, "financial aid, people, facilities, technology, regulations and expectations" (Breneman, p. 15), but no definitive answers were given. Stephen Joel Trachtenburg believes he knows one reason why prices are rising. In his article "College, the Halfway House," he writes "The costs and prices of higher education have escalated, but so have the demands and expectations of the students, their parents and future employers." So, I believe

expectations will be missed if education prices are capped and Trachitenburg sees expectations as a reason for price inflation. One solution to cutting rising prices is finding the sources that are driving the price up and try to alter or eliminate them.

In the debate, no one is disagreeing that Governor Rick Perry's idea to lower education cost is needed, but there is disagreement on how to get there. "The real flaw in Governor Perry's plan is that it does not go quite far enough. We would argue that his focus should not be solely on offering affordable college degrees, but also on linking these degrees to real jobs" (Carnevale, "Just a Start") says Carnevale. Jane Wellman agrees stating, "Governor Perry has clearly got the issue right. But his "solution" is a nonstarter" in her article "Price v Cost". Is the topic of regulated the cost of higher education a way for Perry to get his name on the front page and have people discuss him as a top candidate? The idea is in the right place, now there just needs to be a better plan.

A solution needs to be found for the continually rising cost of higher education, but Governor Perry's plan is not the answer. If a bachelor's degree cost \$10,000 across the board the quality of education would decrease, expectations would not be reached and the solution of online classes does not cut much money, but does cut experience.

### Reference:

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