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**Ensuring continuity in the articulation between career and education:
a Rutgers enhancement**

by Isaac Bickerstaff, Jr.

Colleges and universities enjoy a continuing relationship with their graduates. The graduates grow in learning and experience, and sometimes this results in kindly feelings towards their instructional institutions. Of course, people at the institutions hope that this interaction may result in presents. Such hopes are much too haphazard for the new century, especially for Rutgers, whose financial prospects are frequently fragile and tenuous. We also must declare that we provide a continuing service for our alumni. The university's reputation and accomplishments have improved materially, much beyond what they were when the majority of our graduates attended.

Alumni whose degrees date from two or three decades back now have degrees from a state university which is a member of the AAU and NASULGC, from a state university with 18 members of the National Academies, and from a state university with a vastly increased number of highly prestigious vice-presidents. These improvements are then reflected in the honor and, it should be acknowledged, the return in the marketplace which alumni receive.

I propose that former students be requested to recognize the continuing improvement of Rutgers, and, indeed, the sustained excellence of Rutgers. Each graduate with a bachelors degree should be asked for an annual contribution of \$25 to remain "on the books" at Rutgers. That is, a simple inquiry about attendance would then be answered positively, and requests (certainly accompanied by standard fees) for transcripts would be handled appropriately. This amount is not an excessive sum, and should not be construed as . . . as . . . extortion. It is merely a way to formally recognize that **R is for Excellence** (soon to be the university motto) and to register the respect which those who attended Rutgers feel for the school. Also, the payments would modestly help our fine organization in its economic throes. We will allow students who endure some lean years to be carried for a while, but such consideration will not be abusively extended.

This innovative pay for respect (the counterpart of pay to play, a long tradition in New Jersey) would extend to students of graduate and professional schools. I hesitate to recommend too progressive an assessment, but perhaps we could begin with \$50 annually for Master's degree holders (unless they're in fields likely to score really big bucks!) and \$100 annually for Ph.D. recipients.

This is not at all a "rent a degree" idea, but more "show respect, and do it right". Surely most of our alumni will be happy to participate. Others will need only a small touch of the quirt to comply.