

LETTER TO OLIVER

Dear Oliver,

The cost of a college education is more than meets the eye and more than the pocketbook can meet. What meets the eye at first glance is tuition, room and board. But the cost is more- much more. It's travel expenses, clothing, allowance, books, medical insurance, and many other costs which aren't listed in the college catalogue or on other forms but they're all there. And even more than these, the opportunity for an education costs money from a child's birth. But let me not get ahead of myself!

I must say I was absolutely incredulous to read about your friends' methods of sending their children to college. The formula they used sounded like your grandmother's recipe for apple pie- a pinch here, a cupful there. But the financial formula just doesn't work out when the pinch is giving up smoking, the cupful saving the annual tax deduction. In today's economy, the inflation rolls along at a double digit rate while income increases at only half that amount at best. Pinches and cupfuls aren't enough; a college education is too costly for those measures.

From personal experience I can relate to you a more reasonable method of sending a young person to college today. It's called the "put your own college education package together" method using the help made available by your government, your community and your family. It's a recipe of which I heartily approve. It's a long name, but it makes sense and it's available to all young people who seek a higher education. No longer does it apply for a parent to say, "I can't afford to send my kids to school." No longer can a young person's attitude be, "Dad, you owe me an education." Nor can a community say, "If you want your kid to go to college, dad, you'd better earn more, save more, spend less (a pinch here, a pinch there!). It just doesn't work.

Well, you ask, how does this new method I'm so keen on work? It includes community scholarships, low interest loans such as HELP(Higher Educational Loan Program) or NDSL(National Direct Student Loan), Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG), college scholarships, work study programs on campus during the school year, student summer employment and family contributions.

Let's look briefly at the above. BEOG and college scholarships as well as community scholarships are given free and clear. The BEOG depends entirely on the family's most recent tax return. College and community scholarships depend on need but also reflect academic achievement. Low interest loans through the government, made available through the colleges and local banks, are low interest loans payable years

after the student completes his college education.

Work study programs are offered to students showing need for aid. The average of \$1,000 a year constitutes approximately 10 hours a week on campus at minimum pay per hour. The student can submit the paychecks to the school as tuition payments or can use that money for his weekly expenses.

Of course, summer employment can be a major factor in the monies available for college expenses. but, a young boy or girl who works full time after his junior and senior years is unlikely to save more than \$1000 or \$1500. Certainly there are exceptions- some industrious youngsters manage to save incredible amounts (why not mine, Lord?).

Family responsibility I have saved for last- but not least! That responsibility begins the day the child is born. It encompasses food, clothing, housing, medical expenses, entertainment, valuable learning experiences such as camping and traveling, braces, contact lenses, skin care, gifts such as typewriters and bikes - all the above and much more which make that youngster desirable to the college of his choice: attractive, interesting, unusual, special, talented. The competition is so keen that each student must present himself in the best possible light. As you can see, family responsibility plays a large part in the preparation for young people's college education, but the family cannot be expected to pay for it all. Just think, Oliver, the average family has two youngsters, and each might pursue four years of undergraduate work and three years of graduate work. That's too many pinches and cupfuls to even count.

Let me give you the ingredients of two recipes: 1. Bank Loan-\$2500, BEOG-\$1600, NDSL-\$500, family-\$500, student summer employment-\$1000; total-\$6100; 2. \$1000 community agency scholarship, \$1000-University scholarship, \$1500-bank loan, \$1000-BEOG, \$1000-student, \$600-family, total-\$6100.

The ingredients of a college education today are student determination(which includes studying hard, seeking out available monies, filling out endless forms, getting applications filed in full and on time), family contributions (including moral support, patience, a bit of nagging, and financial support), and government and community participation (it's gratifying to know they will share the burden of the costs). The new recipe??? It's called "Opportunity For An Education: Take It, It's Yours."

I hope to hear from you soon. Stay warm.

Love,

Lucy