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OPINION

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Three-year plan, nice in theory, not in practice

By **MANIKA CASTERLINE**
Opinions editor

Now there is a price to pay in acquiring familiarity in any given academic institution. You learn what the fastest way to any given building is, or in our case how to bypass those formidable Ohlone stairs. You discover through experience what teachers to avoid and which to take. You make the mistake by taking classes you enjoy and delay registering for general education courses.

But, like with all things, there is a trade off that more often than not means waking up one day to the realization that you are still not progressing any further along in your path to transferring. The initial plan was that you were supposed to be at community college for two years. And now you are on the end of year three. Where is "real" college anyway? And once you get

there did you learn the lesson from community college that the priority ought to be on academics not extracurricular?

In the Oct. 26 issue of "Newsweek," Congressman Lamar Alexander proposes the idea that what higher education needs is a three year solution.

That's right, three years to complete an undergraduate degree instead of four. As it is, the average students are now taking approximately six and a half years in order to complete their B.A or B.S degree. And the three-year plan is being equated as higher education's version of a hybrid vehicle, not for everyone.

The three-year plan operates on the premise that by eliminating one year, students will benefit. Students will save approximately 25 percent off their general tuition and will be taking at least 10 units more per academic year. Currently one out of

five students begins college already having attained some college credit from taking an Advanced Placement course in high school. The three-year plan will hypothetically reinvent the American system of higher education as we know it. The question then becomes how could something that looks so good on newsprint in actuality be so deceiving?

I think first we ought to drop the hybrid car metaphor like it's hot and replace it something considerably more dignified, the Travel Channel show, "Man vs. Food." Yeah, I just went there. The three-year plan is indeed comparable to competitive eating. In other words, the first sip of that milkshake may be delicious, but the accelerated speed in which you are drinking it will produce an intense brain freeze. It may appear that finishing in three years is a good idea, but it will come at a certain cost.

A school, whether it be a community college or a university, functions through a variety of components. The most vital of course being the faculty. Teachers are arguably overqualified and under paid for the work that they do. Not to mention that professors also have to battle the entrenched system of reaching tenure, which has a way of more often than not leading toward a slippery slope of entitlement to some extent.

This policy of tenure produces camaraderie and a stagnant state of intellectualism among those who are teaching us to be free-thinking individuals. The job security that occurs comes attached with the death of youthful enthusiasm and passion for any given subject matter. What the three year plan does it makes the occupation more difficult. It takes the present pressures of lack of resources and depleting

financial capital and exacerbates the quandaries that already exist within the system.

On the surface, the three-year plan promises to reduce costs of tuition for students. However, they will be paying for the accelerated degree in other ways. The cost of tuition is constantly on the rise and by having to take more classes per semester so that one can finish in three years means having to pay for more classes. It will significantly lead to less breathing room in terms of pursuing extracurricular, which tend to uphold the principle of team building above self interest. And can teach lessons far reaching the confines of a campus.

The three-year plan requires drastically reinventing how we as a society envision the academic year. The school year of fall term to spring term has historically never been amended despite the Industrial

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Some things are just not meant to be for us

By **ANKITA CHHABRA**
Staff writer

Every once in a while, we find ourselves staring at someone walking down the stairs, out of the bathroom, into a classroom or even just standing in front of us at

Starbucks, and we can't help but to wonder - "Why would you wear that in public?"

Recently I had a moment such as this while I was walking to my Cultural Anthropology class. I caught her with the corner of my eye as she was racing up the stairs, probably arriving late to class, her

body moving up and down in slow motion while her silk shirt flew swiftly with the wind from her panicked movements.

The first thought that ran through my head was how that silk shirt would have looked so much better on me and then why would she wear silk in this kind of heat. But after all

those quick thoughts, I thought to myself why do people wear things that are completely unflattering to their body?

All of us are capable of looking in the mirror and determining when something makes us look fat, shows too many curves, reveals too much inappropriate cleavage, allows for

a peep show of our rear ends every time we get up. Some items of apparel are just not meant to be for us. And yet time and time again we see a lady or gentleman making complete fools of themselves and becoming the next inspiration of a comedian's joke.

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CAMPUS COMMENT >>>

How long should it take to get an undergrad degree?



Andie Morhous
POLITICAL SCIENCE
"As long as it takes to feel comfortable."



Angelica Rodriguez
UNDECIDED
"Three years."



Daniel Martinez
UNDECIDED
"Six years."



Evelyn Mendoza
MULTIMEDIA
"Two years, because I just want to do what I want to do."



Vincente Hernandez
ENGINEERING
"Four years."