

# The Changing Face of American Education

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When former University of Iowa President S

## Weighing the Balance Between Education and Profit

*The University of Iowa examines its role in the national trend of 'University, Inc.'*

By Claire Noack & Olivia Parrott

Colorful envelopes, fliers, and postcards sprawled across the coffee table, all emblazoned with a different university's name. Izzi teDuits '16 felt overwhelmed by their brightly colored slogans and the flood of statistical promises.

"Honestly, if I had never heard of the college before, I just threw them away," teDuits said. "I didn't want to waste my time with those."

The growing stacks of mail loudly advertising various universities and colleges are only a part of a larger trend many have observed; Universities marketing and operating in an increasingly corporate manner.

On October 21, hundreds of University of Iowa students, faculty, and staff gathered outside the Iowa Memorial Union. Their signs read "Iowa Universities are not for sale" and "Say no to University, Inc." They gathered to protest the selection of J. Bruce Harreld as the next U of I president, and to demand that the Board of Regents resign.

"I hope that they do resign," Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies Landon Storrs said. "But even if they don't, I hope that a message was sent to the board and to our incoming president."

Storrs and others at the University expressed worry about Harreld's lack of university administrative experience, as he has spent his career in the private sector.

"I am concerned about appointing an individual who has no experience in higher education," Storrs said. "Mr. Harreld is coming from a very different world."

Harreld was picked from a field of four final candidates, the other three had much wider support.

"Nobody, at the time, thought it made any sense to hire a complete novice when we had three candidates who were very ex-

perienced," Professor Katherine H. Tachau said.

Despite the lack of support for Harreld, the Board of Regents unanimously appointed him on Sept. 3, effective Nov. 2.

Colleges begin competing early for who can reach, through emails and letters alike, prospective students most frequently. Blown up photos of newly-constructed facilities, and a seemingly innumerable amount of programs are meant to impress students.

"The college application process is this really weird, kind of mutual seduction," New York Times guest opinion writer Fredrick deBoer said. "Where colleges want the best students, and students want the best college."

American universities, deBoer believes, have morphed into institutions which place less emphasis on education, and more in the quantity of activities that may have little connection to the quality of education that the university provides.

"They're very much in a need-to, competitive atmosphere," deBoer said. "What happens is that grows to the administrative side of the university, and the administrative side is inherently corporate."

Universities prevailed for a long time in the feudal system, meaning they had a loose, top-down organization that originat-

ed in the feudal period in Germany. Their main purpose was to educate the elite. As access to universities was expanded, the changes were enforced by top-down regulation, creating the large administrative bodies that exist today.

"The problem is that kind of bureaucratic system mushrooms, it just gets bigger and bigger over time," deBoer said.

DeBoer is quick to mention that not all administrative aspects of a university are negative.

"Even though I'm opposed to many of the impacts of the corporate trend," he said. "Part of the reason why it's happening is because of very well-meaning changes to the structure of universities."

Storrs finds the corporate bend of universities concerning as well.

"I am fine with corporations, but I think that there should be areas that are not run according to market values," she said. "And I think that education is one of them."

Tachau similarly believes that there is a sharp distinction between a business's goal and a university's goal.

"Of course we have business aspects to what we do, just as a high school does," Tachau said. "But a high school is not run in order to make a profit, and neither is a university."

One of Storrs' main concerns with an in-

corporated university is the large focus on matching student training to current trends in what the workforce needs.

"I think it's great to have that, I want my kid to be able to get a job when he finishes," Storrs said. "But I don't think that workforce training is the only purpose of higher education."

Storrs also sees a move to, in the name of efficiency and of profitability, cut smaller programs that may not bring much income or glory to the university.

"People should be able to think deeply about the meaning of life, and citizenship, and a lot of really important areas would be lost if we only focused on a really short term definition of what's profitable," Storrs said.

The cultivation of the university's intellectual atmosphere would be compromised, deBoer believes. TeDuits considers the impact the canceling of smaller programs would have on her college experience.

"I'm excited about Iowa because it does have a lot of opportunities. But if [the U of I] didn't have them, I would definitely stay more in my shell," she said. "I wouldn't branch out and make as many new friends, most likely, and I wouldn't try new experiences. And a lot of the time, that's when you find things that you're passionate about," teDuits said. "My experience would not be as good."

Not only would a less diverse university experience affect a student's schooling experience, some would lack the development of skills that will be beneficial in future endeavors.

Even if you get a job, you're going to have to keep learning new things. If you practice learning, you'll be better at those things," teDuits said. "When you get a new job you're going to have to learn to make sure you can adapt to new social environments."

"I WANT MY KID TO BE ABLE TO GET A JOB WHEN HE FINISHES, BUT I DON'T THINK THAT WORKFORCE TRAINING IS THE ONLY PURPOSE OF HIGHER EDUCATION."

-LANDON STORRS

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UI Presidential  
n Committee &  
Parker Executive  
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~ 8.31

Board president facilitates a phone  
call between Harreld and Gov. Terry  
Branstad to reassure Harreld that he  
would have Branstad's support if  
chosen to lead UI.

9.3

Harreld unanimously selected UI  
president after 90 minutes of  
deliberation.

7.30

Harreld meets in Ames with regents  
Milt Dakovich, Katie Mulholland, Mary  
Andringa & Larry McKibben.

9.2

Regents informed that an majority of  
faculty & campus community  
consider Harreld unqualified.

ally Mason announced her intention to retire on January 15th of this year, the U of I searched and scanned for new leadership. Post-decision, the Board of Regents received a lot of backlash in their supposed predetermined pick.

## High Schools Consider New Core Course

*Computer science was relatively unexplored until the 1970s.  
Now, the field has diffused across every level of education.*

By Sofie Lie

When Dan Reed was in high school, he attended a summer physics class where he was first introduced to computer programming. The program Reed was using allowed him to plot the bouncing of a ball, and he quickly became fascinated by the ability to bring mathematics to life.

"Computing is, at its most basic level, about how to solve complex problems," said Reed, who is a professor of computer science at the University of Iowa. "It's about splitting [the problem] into pieces, and thinking about how to solve the sub problems, and how to make an integrated solution."

Reed now advocates for this type of experience for every student in high school. While he is the current chair of computational science at the University of Iowa, he had previously worked as a corporate vice president for Microsoft, where he was responsible for global policy.

"All of my life has been sort of at this boundary of computing, and how it touches the world," Reed said.

It was Reed's early experience, however, that led him to shift his focus from physics to computer science and go on to become one of the first computer science majors in the 1970s, when computer science departments were first established at the university level. Reed explained that it is precisely this early exposure that is so important.

"[Computer science] is a far more fascinating topic than most people realize, just because it can be used for so many things," Reed said. "That's why exposing people to what it really is and then letting them make their own choice, as opposed to either exposing them to a bad version of it or never exposing them to it is important."

Max Hastings '17 had a similar experience to Reed when he first developed an interest for computing. Hastings enjoyed the programming aspect

of an engineering class he took as a freshman, so he decided to pursue his interest in computing and signed up for City High's sole computing course, AP computer science, last year. Hastings credits the course for highlighting his interest in computer science.

"When I signed up for it, I was already geared towards it, but it has definitely put it more forefront in my mind," he said. "Even if you're not going to use [programming], it helps you to understand how pretty much everything works. Electronics and programming are the basis of our life."

Both Reed and Hastings' views on early exposure reflect the priorities of many school districts across the United States that are either requiring that computer science be offered at the high school level or requiring it as a core course. School districts in Chicago recently made the decision to require computer science in order to graduate high school, a policy that will be fully implemented in 2018, and New York City has aimed to at least offer a computer science class to all high school students.

"Anybody who is going to major in an engineering field or a computer science field or a mathematics field would benefit [from a computer science course], or any kind of computer graphics," Danelle Knoche said.

Knoche has taught computer science for 16 years at the high school level, and has watched the computer science program at City High evolve over the years. Although the program has switched over from the computing language C++ to Java, Knoche is assured that the importance of computing lies in coding rather than in language.

"If you know the basics of how to code, you can really go to any language, I tell my students that all the time," she said. "However, the logic and the flow of programming has been the same forever."

The logic of programming has become increasingly more popular; at

Stanford University, computer science is now the most popularly declared major. Knoche believes that the increasing demand for computing skills is leading to this popularity.

"There are a lot of startup companies that have these great ideas about something they want to accomplish, but most people don't have coding schools in order to start up their company," she said.

Although Iowa does not currently have a high school requirement for computer science, Governor Terry Branstad's STEM Advisory Council is working to make computer science more accessible to students. Reed believes that this is beneficial as it prompts critical thinking that can apply to any subject.

"The thing that's really interesting about [computer science] is that, unlike other sciences that are only applicable in certain places, computing is universally applicable," he said. "An education in computer science is the liberal arts education for a technological century."

One of the main reasons that school districts are implementing computer science requirement policies is to address the misrepresentation of women and minorities in technologically based careers. Although Reed advocates for the expansion of computer science programs at the high school level, he doubts it will address this misrepresentation.

"That sort of gender bias starts to happen before high school, and even much earlier than that," Reed said.

Despite this, Reed describes a new outlook as the greatest benefit of taking computer science courses; not job opportunities.

"Computing cuts across so many things that we do today, so understanding how computers work and those skills have really broad help," he said. "It's not so much about learning computing because it is a job, but learning computing because it's a way to think about the world."

## TOP FIVE HIGHEST PAYING MAJORS

1) ENGINEERING

2) COMPUTER SCIENCE

3) PHYSICS

4) MATHEMATICS

5) ECONOMICS

According to Bankrate.com