

Community Comment
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HSU Graduation and Vote

Last weekend was Graduation at HSU. Arcata and all of Humboldt County were full of visitors. Mostly they were the parents and families of graduates that came from all over to witness this ceremony. It's a crazy weekend at our Inn as we book more than a year in advance for this event. The feedback we heard about the ceremonies were quite good this year; especially the noon session which featured our Congressman, Jared Huffman. President Richmond presided over his last graduation at HSU and he made himself and the university proud.

I'm not big on most ceremonies. But I think graduating from college is a milestone worth the time and expense to witness. Even in the 21st century, college graduates are still not anywhere near the majority of people on this planet or even this country. But that is changing, and therein lies the hope for our future. A college degree isn't magical. It requires dedication and hard work. It requires commitment and focus. Having the degree carries no guarantee that you will be successful in a career or make a lot of money. But there are some things we do know about graduates of colleges and universities.

Graduates are more likely to make more money over the course of their lives. They are more likely to be responsible and contributing members of society. They are more likely to be stable and aware of their surroundings. They are more likely to participate in their communities.

These things don't happen because they were awarded a degree; they happen because they earned a degree. Each graduate had to take responsibility for this accomplishment at some point. They learned how to learn and think and analyze. They learned to complete tasks even when they were boring. They learned to write and make a rational argument. They learned how to work independently and as part of a team. And, in most majors, they learned enough skills to compete for an entry level job that could lead to a satisfying and rewarding career.

Is a degree necessary or right for everyone? Probably not. But everyone can benefit from a college level education. It's not just the major you choose, or the classes you take. It's also the people you work with and the experience you have. It's also the community that that you live in during your college experience. I hear from parents from all over this state and this country that Arcata and Humboldt County has been a very positive experience for their child. For that, we all should be proud of our small role in contributing to the successful experience of the graduates of HSU.

Once again, congratulations to our graduates; and to the President, staff, and faculty that make this education possible.

College graduate or not, remember to vote in the upcoming primary election. Every chance to vote was paid for by our founders, our elected officials, past generations, and especially our veterans. We can't let them down.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.