Are students unknowingly cheating?  
A look at the lesser known Honors Code offenses

LAUREN LOMAKA
FRONT PAGE EDITOR

As a student of Virginia Commonwealth University, specifically a student in the Honors College, it often assumed that you, compared to the majority of students on campus, would be least likely to cheat or violate VCU’s Honor System. But what if students violate the code without knowing?

Most students have heard that it is our responsibility to have previously read the VCU honor code before attending the University, but how many students have taken the time to read the entire ten and a half page document?

The code begins with, “Virginia Commonwealth University recognizes that honesty, truth and integrity are values central to its mission as an institution of higher education.” Many who read this may think ‘Well I don’t lie and I’ve never copied anyone else’s work, so there’s no way I’ve violated the Honor System.’ You yourself may not have cheated or lied, but have you ever been in a class where it is clear people are sharing answers? Did you go up to the professor after class, or meet in his or her office to discuss the matter? If the answer is no, you are in violation of ‘Section II: Rights and Responsibilities of the VCU Community,’ which states students are responsible to “Report suspicion or knowledge of possible violations of the Honor System.”

The Honor System states “The categories of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, any deliberate and dishonest act that results in, or could result in, a student receiving an unfair advantage in an academic matter.” This is then followed by definitions of the 5 possible violations: plagiarism, lying, cheating, stealing, and facilitating. Perhaps the most broad definition of the ‘possible violations’ is cheating, which is described as “receiving, giving and attempting to receive or give unauthorized assistance, such as materials, devices, information, notes or sources, on academic matters.” In many classes, teachers are kind enough to provide students with old versions of tests and quizzes so students may acquaint themselves with the teacher’s style of questioning. However, not all classes have such resources available. Is it fair for a few students whose friends have previously taken the class to receive old tests and quizzes so students may acquaint themselves with the teacher’s style of questioning? Since the assistance did not come from the professor, can it be seen as unauthorized? If not all students in the class know someone who has previously taken the course, is it an unfair advantage? Would the students who absent-mindedly handed over an old binder of notes to a friend be subject to the same honor code consequences under ‘facilitating’?

The argument for being able to share the tests would most likely be ‘the teacher let’s us keep them at the end, if they didn’t want others to be able to see them, they would keep all of their tests.’ While some teachers don’t allow students to take tests home, other do as study aids for later exams and finals. Some professors have even gone so far as to say if students themselves have previously taken the class to receive old tests and quizzes. These can be the results of actions students consider to be harmless, just think, is getting an extra study aid in the form of a friend’s old tests really worth it?

For student who wish to read the document in its entirety, it can be found at: http://www.provost.vcu.edu/pdfs/Honor_system_policy.pdf

cartoon by Sparsh Gola
Features

Troubled economy leads to VCU cuts

ANEESH GOEL
BUSINESS EDITOR

Everyone has heard about the stock market dropping more than ever as the Dow Jones Industrial Average Index dips below 7000 basis points for the first time in 11 years. However, most students have no idea what this actually means or how significant this information is. The battered economy has significantly reduced the state of Virginia’s budget which has forced Governor Tim Kaine to cut state spending on higher education, among other options. Governor Kaine has passed multiple reductions in funding for VCU’s current and upcoming fiscal years, meaning that the university will need to cut costs. These cuts will inevitably affect the education of all VCU students in the years to come.

Governor Kaine’s budget reduction plans for VCU began in fiscal year 2008, which started July 1, 2007 and ended June 30, 2008. Governor Kaine initiated a 5% mid-year budget cut for VCU which equated to a $10.1 million reduction in state funding. This reduction in funding occurred between Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 semesters, meaning that half of the university’s allocated funds for that fiscal year had already been spent. Thus, the 5% reduction in funds for the 2008 fiscal year effectively became a 10% cut. The university weathered this budget cut with the prospect of a turn-around in the economy.

However, as economic conditions worsened, Governor Kaine was forced to further reduce spending on higher education. For fiscal year 2009, Governor Kaine approved another 5% cut in VCU’s funding, which equated to another $10.1 million. In addition, Governor Kaine has already approved a 15% cut to VCU’s 2010 fiscal year budget. These cuts will undoubtedly affect VCU students in the Honors College in many ways.

Due to the governor’s budget cuts for VCU, the Honors College is being forced to cut study abroad scholarships for honors students. This is a major concern for Dr. Timothy Hulsey, Dean of the Honors College. He plans to search for funding outside of the university in order to secure future scholarships for these students. Although the Honors College’s budget has been slashed significantly, the Honors College staff has worked diligently to prepare and plan for future budget reductions. Dr. Hulsey has created a plan to deal with future budget cuts while maintaining small class sizes for Honors College students. In an interview, Dr. Hulsey stated, “The number of seats in honors courses will never exceed 20.” This is reassuring to honors students who believe that small classes allow for enriching discussions and a better education. The Honors College is doing its best to ensure that it maintains quality instruction for Honors College students in difficult economic times.

Do It Yourself:
Solutions for surviving your small space

VICTORIA HRIBAR
FEATURES EDITOR

JOSH KILLINGER
FEATURES EDITOR

College living has become synonymous with surviving in very confined areas. Whether it be your dorm room or your apartment, you more than likely do not have the ideal amount of living space. But no longer do you have to feel cramped in your living situation! Many emerging interior design web sites offer great advice for how to live large in your small space! So as you settle your living arrangements for the next school year, look to these sites for trendy, practical designs and decorations for your space.

Apartmenttherapy.com offers innovative ideas to cure your small-space woes. With tons of resources, ideas, and an entire online community, Apartment Therapy specializes in ingenious uses of small rooms. Offering unique ways to personalize your living quarters while utilizing your space, they suggest the best two things to do are stick to a color scheme and stay organized with smart storage. This will give you maximum amounts of space and a cohesive atmosphere. They believe that creating a unified, personal space allows for a calm, successful environment.

Another great web site, Rentaldecorating.com can aid the transformation of your apartment or dorm. Their Interior Design 101 section teaches the basics of developing a floor plan that will help you arrange your furniture in the most advantageous way. With an entire department of their site devoted to “Dorm Decorating and College Life” they give realistic tips and tricks for using your space efficiently. They provide ideas such as utilizing wall space for shelving and hooks as well as hanging wall art to create the illusion of a larger space. Containing tons of easy and inexpensive ideas for beginners to experiment in the realms of Interior Design, Rental Decorating gives you the all basic tools you need to be your own designer.

If you are short on time, the online store, tinyliving.com, sells all the home essentials for minimum space. Created in response to the decreasing average square footage most Americans have to live in, Tiny Living sells compact, flexible, and multifunctional products. Using such things as their “Entryway Organizer” to hold keys, money, and your cell phone, you can efficiently organize and maximize the space you do have. No matter the size of your living space, you can make it your own using the vast amount of resources available on the web as help.

Before

After

Online resources help many students make the most of their college home away from homes. Web sites like rentaldecorating.com and apartmenttherapy.com provide great ways to make the most of a small living space (photo courtesy of www.bc.edu and www.lau.edu).
Genetically Modified Organism’s (GMO’s) have become breaking news in the agricultural world. Genetically modified organisms have been in the workings of the scientific world for years but have just recently been used in application with food. Over the past two months in Europe, many protests have been held against genetically modified food. In response to the global issue, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) held three open meetings in Chicago, Illinois, Washington, D.C., and Oakland, California to elicit public opinions and begin setting up federal guidelines for programs dealing with this.

The genetic engineering approach to crops is faster than breeding plants, and more efficient in making the plants resistant to herbivores and weather hazards. Plants can have genes inserted in them from other plants, as well as genes from non-plant organisms. With this potential, it has been theorized that food would be able to grow in vast uninhabited desert areas now that scientists have the ability to introduce the “drought resistant” gene into any crop.

With such glorified possibilities, what could people be questioning about? Side effects might influence both humans and animals. There was recently a study done which concluded that the digestive tracts of the rats eating GM food was “greatly different” than the digestive tracts of rats eating regular food. The implications of these differences have not yet been obtained, and the results of the study are being called “flawed” by proponents of GM food.

Other side effects include the destruction of wildlife in the areas where crops with new genes are introduced. One study shows the pollen from a GM corn crop is deadly to monarch butterfly larvae. Again, these results are scrutinized as “flawed” by scientists working on GM food. The projected benefits are clear; the side effects and possible harmful aspects of the study are still being determined.

With such controversy many are concerned about where these products are being used. Jean E. Clark, the Virginia Commonwealth University Dining Services Manager, stated “Shafter Dining Center’s executive chef procures the most natural fresh forms of food available.” To the best of her knowledge, the VCU’s vendors do not supply the university with GM food. If this is an issue you feel strongly about, feel free to contact the VCU Dining Services for more information.

When others are gearing up to get ready for summer vacations and the onset of finals, the Ladies of Kappa Phi Gamma Sorority, Incorporated (or KPhiG as they’re known by their peers and friends) are getting ready for their annual C.A.R.E. Week. Short for “Cancer Awareness, a Real Effort,” KPhiG at VCU, along with their sisters nationwide, dedicate an entire week in April to making their campus more aware of cancer, its challenges, issues, and research progress. Any proceeds made throughout the week go directly to an organization that deals with cancer this year being St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital. In the last few years, nationally KPhiG has raised and donated over $57,000 to various cancer-related facilities.

Although the organization on campus is fairly small, the dedication and effort put forth into this event by the Sisters of KPhiG make C.A.R.E. Week an event not to be overlooked. “It’s so evident when C.A.R.E. Week rolls around that the sisters truly are passionate about our philanthropy. This is the week we look forward to at the beginning of every year; we want each one to be better than the last” said Meril George, a Honors College student and sister of Kappa Phi Gamma.

This year’s fourth annual C.A.R.E. Week at VCU had activities like the Candlelight Vigil (for those that have been afflicted with cancer or know those that have), a forum about various treatments for types of cancers, a service event to spend time with those less fortunate, and the sorority’s staple “Sweet Words for the Sweet Tooth” event that had all kinds of desserts and fruit with chocolate fondue, all while making cards and crafts to send to kids with cancer at neighboring hospitals. Kappa Phi Gamma Sorority, Incorporated is proud to have C.A.R.E. Week slowly become both a tradition and a staple of the Greek Community and their philanthropies. The fifth annual C.A.R.E. to be held in April 2010 only promises to be that much better!
Honors College students have a lifetime worth of experiences in Amsterdam

Amsterdam is everything we imagined and more. We have been here for a little over a month and we are still in awe every time we wander into the city. Vinay and I are studying economics at VU University Amsterdam, which is a modern school situated in the business district. Interestingly, the school buildings are few in number but large in size and height; most of our courses are in a 16 story building!

Our semester is divided into two terms; we have 2 courses each term. There are absolutely no assignments and no tests. Our entire grade, for the most part, is dependent on the final, which can be stressful but also offers us plenty of time to enjoy. Lecturers follow a seemingly standard method of providing an overview for the day’s lecture and then reading from the slides with some supplement.

While it seems as if most people live well in Amsterdam based on our glimpses into their apartments, our housing is a little less luxurious. Perhaps they put all the international students in the same dilapidated building to create a sense of camaraderie. International students are amazing nevertheless; conversation is very easy to make and everyone is genuinely interested in what others have to say. We are learning to cook Italian food from an actual Italian and about Brazilian music from a guy from San Paulo. While the Dutch speak in their native language between themselves, they all speak fluent English when approached in English.

When we are not at school or chilling in the dorm, we are usually pretending to be Dutch students so that we can ride the public transport for free. Amsterdam is full of narrow roads, alleys, and lots of canals, all summing to an extraordinary sight in this historic city. The night time, in my opinion, offers the best view. There are plenty of museums (Van Gogh, Rembrandt, Anne Frank, etc.), lots of restaurants, pubs, and even coffee shops of both the traditional and risqué variety. As for cultural differences, the Netherlands is very efficient. There are more bikes than people (huge mode of transportation), they have windmills to generate electricity, and they charge you for the plastic bags at grocery stores.

Honors students Naren Nimmagadda and Vinay Someshekar are currently studying abroad for a semester in Amsterdam. They journaled about their experiences to show other students the benefits of studying abroad. Above is a picture of the canals in Amsterdam (photo by Vinay Someshekar).

Watching spring emerge in Amsterdam is one of the most overwhelming sensations I’ve ever experienced. Experiencing the first tulips bulbing, the smell of tranquility changing into a warm and fruitful aroma characterizing an entire city is perhaps something only one can experience from living here. The town of endless canals which was once a fishing village grew into a world-class city with time.

Walking along these canals gives a picturesque flavor of Dutch architecture. The building widths are very narrow, but some have more than 4 or 5 floors. Hooks bridge out from the roofs to facilitate the hoisting of furniture to the various levels of the houses. On occasion I have to pinch myself to truly believe that I’m here. Each time I travel into the heart of the city, I feel nostalgic about a past I have not experienced. I feel empowered by the incredible history of the place. I’m walking the same streets as Van Gogh and Rembrandt. Studying economics in a place where the Dutch developed some of the fundamental theories and principles of the science is an incredible experience. I’ve never truly marveled at another culture in the way I do with the Dutch. Never has something like this truly changed the way I perceive my life.

If there were only a few adjectives to characterize the Dutch mentality they would be efficient, straightforward and shrewd with regard to business. Although some may perceive such a predisposition as arrogance, it’s actually a more brutally honest way of living life.

One of the biggest differences in this country is the plethora of bicycles-on streets, parked in front of shops and houses; there are bike lanes devoted entirely to them. Half of the cycles in this city are stolen every year.

The most delectable food I’ve had so far is the stroopwafel-Caramel/Syrup in between two cookie crackers. This explanation does not do the food justice so if and when you decide to visit Amsterdam or the Netherlands, you MUST try it. This city is also known for the over 58 museums. The Van Gogh museum and the Starry Night exhibit is a must-see. The way my eyes just floated aimlessly through his paintings is an experience I shall never forget. The M.C. Escher museum in Hague was an experience in perspective and optical illusion-art that played with my mind and perception. Also in Hague, the beach by Zandvoort offered some of the most amazing depictions of sunset. The purple haze in the sunset quite literally took my breath away. Adjusting to this place is quite literally took my breath away. Adjusting to this place is a learning experience. I’ve never truly marveled at another culture in the way I do with the Dutch. Never has something like this truly changed the way I perceive my life.

One of the biggest differences in this country is the plethora of bicycles-on streets, parked in front of shops and houses; there are bike lanes devoted entirely to them. Half of the cycles in this city are stolen every year.

The most delectable food I’ve had so far is the stroopwafel-Caramel/Syrup in between two cookie crackers. This explanation does not do the food justice so if and when you decide to visit Amsterdam or the Netherlands, you MUST try it. This city is also known for the over 58 museums. The Van Gogh museum and the Starry Night exhibit is a must-see. The way my eyes just floated aimlessly through his paintings is an experience I shall never forget. The M.C. Escher museum in Hague was an experience in perspective and optical illusion-art that played with my mind and perception. Also in Hague, the beach by Zandvoort offered some of the most amazing depictions of sunset. The purple haze in the sunset quite literally took my breath away. Adjusting to this place is quite literally took my breath away. Adjusting to this place is a learning experience. I’ve never truly marveled at another culture in the way I do with the Dutch. Never has something like this truly changed the way I perceive my life.
In his speech at the Stamp Lecture, London School of Economics, Chairman Ben Bernanke discussed the quantitative easing policy being used by the Federal Reserve to stabilize the economy and explained how this policy is different from the credit policy that was used by the Japanese Central Bank during the 2001-2006 aggregate demand shock. He discussed that the Federal Funds rate has declined 425 basis points and the Discount Rate has been cut by over 350 basis points since the crisis began.

The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) has kept the inflationary pressures in mind at the time of making decision to lower the fed funds rate and approve discount rate changes by the respective regional banks. The FOMC has maintained that the rising commodity prices were due to lack of supply and also because of increased demand of commodities in emerging markets. Earlier, the FOMC had rejected the notion of general inflationary pressures that were believed by economists to have been primarily responsible for increase in commodity prices.

In addition, the FOMC had predicted that there would be a global slowdown and the commodity prices would level out. In fact the commodity prices have fallen instead of leveling out. Therefore the aggressive monetary easing used by the FOMC did not lead to inflation. The monetary easing has helped to lower the lending rates.

Other actions taken by the Fed. have helped to maintain the much needed liquidity in the economy. Therefore, it has been successful in preventing a major credit disaster that could have led to the worst recession in US history. Important policy toolkit includes effective policy communications that remove future uncertainty. Bernanke believes that FOMC’s statement, “economic conditions are likely to warrant an unusually low federal funds rate for some time” helped in boosting confidence in the public, which led to downward pressure on the long term interest rate and in a way helped the aggregate demand. He also believes that the FOMC’s statements should be linked to the evolving economic outlook. Doing so helps improve the conditions in the economy. He summarizes the three set of tools that were used by the Federal Reserve to stabilize the economy. The three set of policy tools include lending directly to financial institutions, providing liquidity to credit markets, and buying up the long term securities from GSE’s such as Freddie and Fannie Mae. These set of policy tools use the Federal Reserve’s assets on the balance sheet and help in easing the credit situation by restoring liquidity in spite of an extremely low Fed Funds rates.

The quantitative easing of Federal Reserve is different from the credit easing used by the Japanese Bank during 2001-2006. The Federal Reserve is not only using the excess reserves that it has but it is also using receipts from the treasury issued debt to support its facilities, lending to banks, and to purchase the GSE’s long term debt. The quantitative easing is helping to support aggregate demand as the current situation has substantially impaired the financial markets and institutions. Bernanke also discussed the exit strategy to unwind the special facilities that were opened by the Federal Reserve after authorization from the FOMC. According to him, “the committee will monitor the credit situation and will scale the facilities down when the situation improves.” The Fed. will have to do it as it is the facilities would not be permitted once the credit situation stabilizes. The authority given to the Fed. by the congress to pay interest on excess reserve will help in controlling the Fed. Funds. Rate in future. The treasury’s policy of keeping its receipt from issuing debt will help in reducing reserves from the system. The exit strategy will be used to maintain low unemployment, moderate inflation and low long term interest rate.

In the end, Bernanke called for better regulation and supervision on part of regulatory agencies in future to prevent such crisis from again happening. He discussed that the Federal Reserve retains powerful policy tools and will use them aggressively to help achieve this objective and that international cooperation is essential for a healthy and sustained recovery. Hopefully, the actions taken by the Fed. along with the stimulus package will help in restoring the much needed stability in the economy thereby ensuring low interest rate, low price level and moderate unemployment.
VCU Bhangra beats out all competition

AMANDA HANN
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Thousands filled the Landmark Theater April 4 for the Apna Virsa Apna Punjabi Bhangra Competition. The aroma of Indian cuisine filled the air as shoppers gazed at handmade Indian outfits and tried on pieces of jewelry. The shopping area vacated as soon as the show began. There were over ten groups that performed including VCU’s own Bhangra Dance Team. The music, which consisted of Punjabi artists mixed with hip hop, had everyone in the audience tapping their foot as the beat was too catchy to ignore. The performers pranced across the stage in beautiful, bright attire that accentuated the leg and arms movements of the dances.

At this point, some of you may be asking, “What is Bhangra?” Bhangra originated in Punjab, India and is a high energy, folk dance that expresses joy and happiness. It is used to reflect the jubilance of the simple things in life. Music is played and a dholi (drummer) helps to keep the beat as the dancers move across the stage. The music can consist of pure rhythm, pre-recorded Punjabi lyrics, or live lyrics with one person singing as the rest of the team dances. The singing is done in a strong, forceful tone and the dancers use instruments to add rhythm and visual effects to the show.

The VCU Bhangra Dance Team was started in May 2004 when Nikhil Desai and Sweta Dharia met as freshmen. “We wanted to bring talented people together to participate in Punjabi folk dance,” Desai said. Both freshmen had been active in their high school’s Bhangra dance teams and wanted to continue the tradition by starting a college level team. They aspired to one day have a team similar to those of George Washington University and the University of Michigan. Initially, there were only ten members of the VCU Bhangra Dance Team, the primary goal was to have fun and stay fit via dancing. By 2005, the team began to compete in national dance competitions such as the Annual Indian Bazaar where they won second place. That same year, the team was recognized as an official student organization at VCU, and was given a large stipend allowing them to travel to India and have their costumes made. In true VCU fashion, the members decided to get black and gold costumes, and used these outfits to compete at Bhangra Blowout in Washington, D.C.

Bhangra Blowout is the largest Bhangra competition in the nation. When VCU placed third, it truly put them on the map. After placing so high in that contest, they decided to compete in their first ever international competition, the ZTV Bhangra Competition. Again, this amazing dance team took third place. Since then, they have competed all over the U.S., as well as in Vancouver. With their bright and unique styled outfits and smooth dance moves, it is easy to see why the VCU Bhangra Dance Team is the #1 college Bhangra team in the nation.

As mesmerizing as their dancing is, it is not what stands out the most about the VCU Bhangra Team. For starters, this team truly looks out for each other as they realize grades take priority over pastime activities. The current 28 members, which consist of 12 starters who compete in all of the national competitions, 12 rookies, 2 coaches, a manager, and a dholi, have an average combined GPA of 3.65 and 4 of the members have been accepted into medical school this fall. Even greater is this team’s devotion to the community. They have donated their competition proceeds to numerous charities and causes including the MCV Massey Cancer Center. As Desai pointed out, the team is “very mindful of care, cause, and the community.” The team’s goals have shifted from the original “just want to dance and have fun” mentality to a more mature and altruistic mindset. The new goals are to help those in need, to promote awareness of public health issues, and to raise cultural awareness of India. Desai is very pleased with all of the members of the team and said he “never thought it would be possible to be so multifaceted.”

Leaving a great legacy, Maynor looks to future

VICTORIA HRIBAR
FEATURES EDITOR

NCAA Tournament against UCLA. Despite the loss, Maynor walks away from the Rams as the all-time leading scorer and assisted for VCU, as well as the recipient of two consecutive CAA Player of the Year awards. Earning CAA Tournament MVP honors, Richmond Times Dispatch State Player of the Year, and named to three different All-American teams, Maynor’s hard work throughout his college career is quite obvious. Even though the Rams did not advance in the 2009 NCAA Tournament, Maynor showed us that he can play on a bigger stage. The time and work he put into basketball, especially to improve his shooting, has prepared him for a future in professional sports. Always a leader on the court, he has been recognized as one of the nation’s best guards, and it is clear that this is not the last we will get to see of him. An expected late first round pick for the NBA draft, he will move on from VCU with his awards stacked high.

Ryan Black, NBA assistant director of scouting, spoke of Maynor’s potential draft into the NBA by saying, “Obviously, he has blossomed. He’s shot the ball a lot better this year, and his strength is the way he handles the ball and his ability to dish it.” If drafted, Maynor will be the first CAA player since Cal Bowl- der of Old Dominion University in 1999 to play in the NBA. Although most of the “draft talk” is only speculation for the time being, this June, Eric Maynor’s future in the NBA will unfold.
VCU honors student Umar Alam feels strongly that the European system of education is more practical. Above is a picture of Oxford University in Oxford, Great Britain (photo courtesy of http://media-2.web.britannica.com).

Opinion

Student questions the rationality behind criminalizing Marijuana use

Let’s discuss a serious problem in our society, a college one, and one that has been troubling law enforcement officials for quite some time now: marijuana. We all know what people say about it: it’s bad for you, it will leave you with a distorted consciousness and you’ll be hallucinating to the point where you think you’re in outer space. But is it really harmful to your body as anti-drug spokesmen would like you to think?

One thing is for sure, it is not addictive like alcohol and tobacco. Of course the feeling of getting ‘high’ may persuade some to become habitual users, but biologically speaking it does not contain any addictive chemical compounds. Marijuana may be the most widely used illegal drug out there, and is certainly one of the easiest to attain with many dealers all over the place. Just to your dorm (if not already in it) and you will find suppliers.

The U.S Government spends close to 14 billion dollars every year trying to deal with marijuana (police enforcement, judges, jails, etc.). This is quite a large sum when you take the failing economy into mind, so why not just legalize the joint? Recent studies have shown that it costs about $1.70 to produce a joint, but you buy the same amount off of the street for around $7.00 (varies depending on where you live). If the U.S. were to legalize this drug and tax it the same way that cigarettes were taxed, the economic gain would be two fold. Firstly, the $14 billion dollars would be cut by at least 85 to 90% taking into account the fees for enforcing health regulations on the production of marijuana and such.

Secondly, the money generated from tax revenues would be phenomenal after the initial onset of legalizing marijuana and would steady out within five years or so. We have once dealt with a problem like marijuana before, alcohol. We had the prohibition period but we could do little to stop use, and we’re doing the same thing with marijuana, a ‘drug’ that actually kills a significantly fewer number of people than alcohol. In actuality, marijuana kills 0, yes Z-E-R-O, people each year. Don’t believe me? Search ‘United States Government National Institute on Drug Abuse, Bureau of Mortality Statistics’ on google and you’ll see for yourself. So if we have legalized tobacco (kills 400k/yr) and alcohol (100k/yr) then why not take the next step and legalize a compound that has been part of human history from the dawn of man.

An alternative to sixteen years of schooling, student investigates another route

Ever feel like some of the classes you’re in won’t ever help you with anything in life? I, for one, will freely confess this has been a feeling at least once every semester regarding a class. The schooling system in the United States likes us to go to school for at least 16 years (not counting pre-k) before we can get into graduate school. This is a bit over the top, I think.

The British Schooling System and the former colonies, and commonwealths of England have adopted a system where there is only 12 years of school before graduate school. In this system, there are 10 years of primary and secondary school (elementary and junior high), and then a two year period of ‘college.’ During the college period students start to specialize in either the arts or the sciences and get ready for their ‘university’ or graduate school equivalent.

I think this system is definitely an upgrade from ours because it takes away the potential of having to take classes which may not be very applicable to what we wish to do in life.

Sure, a shortened system takes away time to ‘find yourself,’ but still, I’m pretty sure most of us know what we want to do after high school anyway. Giving us a chance to go to graduate school at a young age would produce degree holders at a very young age, and would increase the work force as a result. Some may claim that this is all way too fast but I disagree. Other nations in the world seem to be doing fine utilizing this system, so we should be able to do the same as well. Imagine being a doctor or lawyer by the age of 22! A longer work career not only does you good (you make more money), but does the society good by having a greater work force to meet the demand of the growing population.
Ways YOU can save the world!

Wear heirlooms and shop at antique stores
Creating one gold ring results in 20 tons of mine waste.

Read your newspaper online
Getting a newspaper for a year uses .35 trees.

Unplug electrical equipment when you’re not using them (save 5 to 10 percent on your electric bill)
Appliances use power when they’re off generating unnecessary greenhouse gases.

Drink water from the tap
40 percent of bottled water comes from the tap; making plastic for bottled water generates 4 pounds of carbon dioxide per person in a year.

---

Summer Fun
Things you can do in Richmond:

1. Friday Cheers: Enjoy live music at the American Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar across from Brown Island, every Friday from May through July. Support local bands playing a variety of contemporary music as you relax against the cool breeze of the James River. The best part? Admission is free.

2. Hollywood Cemetery: Spend an afternoon paying homage to our country’s rich history. Founded in 1847, Hollywood Cemetery houses the graves of historical figures such as the Confederate President Jefferson Davis, General J.E.B. Stuart, Presidents James Monroe and John Tyler, novelists James Branch Cabell and Ellen Glasgow, as well as over 18,000 Confederate soldiers. Public visiting hours are between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. daily, and historical tours are offered every Sunday. Visit http://www.hollywoodcemetery.org/ for more information.

3. 17 Street Farmers Market: Enrich your body and soul with the freshest, tastiest and most nutritious, and cheapest produce, dairy, wine, meat and cheese! All locally grown, brewed and produced, the farmers market supports the local economy, and saves energy required for shipping. Hours: Wednesday 3 to 7 p.m. and Thursday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Growers and Crafters market; Friday 4 to 8 p.m. Red, White and Brew Market, and Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mercado Market. Visit www.richmond.gov/econdev/farmersmarket/default.htm for more information.

4. St. John’s Church Public Reenactments: Travel back through time by attending St. John’s Church Public Reenactments. Presented at the original location, professional actors portray our founding fathers at the Second Virginia Convention of March 1775. Each reenactment begins with a patriotic music program performed on the rare Adam Stein organ, and is followed by reenactments of the heated debates that lead to Patrick Henry’s famous “Give me liberty or give me death” speech. Free ticketing for this popular program begins at 1 p.m. every Sunday, so get their early and settle in for a historical treat! Information at http://www.historicstjohnschurch.org/reenactments.html.

5. Animalia: Celebrate your animal lovin’ on June 6th from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the 17th St. Farmers Market on Brown Island! Feeling competitive? Bring your own little companion to participate in several competitions such as “Greystest Muzzle,” and “Niftiest Pet.” Free admission includes festivities such as the famous “Pet Parade,” a petting zoo, and a themed children’s art activity. For more information call (804) 646-0310 or visit www.17thstreetfarmersmarket.com.