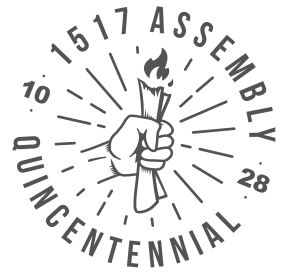


A Rem 95



1. Life in the U.S. begins with a 13-year mandatory minimum sentence: K-12.
2. Anytime you see anxious parents sweating over their daughter's pre-school interview, remember that university admissions committees have established the system of rewards and punishments that loom even over juicy bottle time.
3. Higher education has become America's national religion, complete with heaven and hell, salvation and damnation. You're a winner or a sinner. It's Yale or jail.
4. A "well-rounded" student is often only a euphemism for a ruthless workaholic in a greyhound race for a useless mechanical lure.
5. What is a college application but a fight to the death for prestige?
6. "The worst kind of virtue never stops striving for virtue and so never achieves virtue." -- Laozi
7. "Would you rather have a Princeton diploma without a Princeton education, or a Princeton education without a Princeton diploma? If you pause to answer, you must think signaling is pretty important." -- economist Bryan Caplan
8. Why are there some 5,300 universities and colleges in the U.S. but only one point of view?
9. We have to have the freedom to be the only person who believes something.
10. There can be no safety without dangerous ideas.
11. What is respectable is unoriginal.
12. The risk of being wrong is the price of being right.
13. The most exciting things work in practice but not theory.
14. Beware of any group that spends most its time deciding who can be admitted.
15. Harvard could admit ten times as many students, but it doesn't. It could open ten more campuses in different regions, but it doesn't. Elite schools are afraid of diluting brand equity. They're not in the education business. They're in the luxury watch business.
16. Harvard is the richest, oldest, and most powerful hedge fund in the world--AUM \$38 billion. It also happens to have a nonprofit real estate company full of kids attached for tax purposes. If they run their business like Warren Buffett, then endowments should be taxed like Warren Buffett.
17. The debt to party ratio on campus is too damn high.
18. Total student loan debt in the United States is now more than \$1.5 trillion.
19. In 1987, the year Stephen Trachtenberg became president of George Washington University, students paid \$27,000 (in 2017 dollars) in tuition, room, and board. When he retired twenty years later, they paid more than double--close to \$60,000. Trachtenberg made GW the most expensive school in the nation without improving education at all. The degree "serves as a trophy, a symbol," he said. "I'm not embarrassed by what we did." There are buildings on campus named after this guy.
20. It is no coincidence that the architects of prisons are also the architects of high schools.
21. We put adults in correctional institutions because of their crimes; we put children in them because of their age.
22. The cage is for the protection of the captor.
23. The power of the government should not be used to compel everyone to learn the same things in the same way at the same place at the same pace at the same age.
24. High School noun (1824): a place where students repeat "me gusta" for four years in Spanish class and still can't speak the language.
25. Play not plow: a lesson should look more like a group game than working in the fields.
26. In most schools, boredom with tedium has been diagnosed as a psychological disorder. It is as if we diagnosed orca whales as mentally ill because they lost energy floating in tiny tanks at SeaWorld.
27. They'd rather drink poison: emergency poison centers in the US admitted about 76,500 teens into their care last year for "intentional exposure," a rather quaint, bureaucratic term for attempted suicide. That's up 25,500 since 2011. The number of teens admitted to ERs for suicidal thoughts and actions has doubled in a decade and the rate spikes seasonally at the start of every school year. Sixty-two percent of undergraduates report feeling "overwhelming anxiety" in the last year.
28. The problem in schooling is not that we have invested too little, but that we get so little for so much.
29. "Never let schooling interfere with your education." Let us define schooling as the set of processes used to instruct at a physical location where young people are confined and controlled for some interminable stretch of time. And let us say that education is something far richer and more important: knowledge, play, truth, discovery, sharing.
30. A school will defend itself against the true education it hates.
31. That education is best which teaches us to educate ourselves.
32. The foundation for any real education is not only to take responsibility for who we are but also for who we might become.
33. Give whatever public money is currently spent on schools to families to spend on educating their kids how they see it best.
34. The best institutions blend learning with experience, such as University of Waterloo's co-op program. The map and the territory are rarely the same; a diagram of an acorn will never grow into an oak. "Periplum, not as land looks on a map, but as sea bord seen by men sailing."
35. The 529 plan, offering college savers tax benefits, should allow for broader spending on learning experiences such as gap years, bootcamps, and other forms of project-based learning.

36. There's no iron law of economics that says tuition should go up--and only up--year after year. By many measures, universities are the same or worse at teaching students as they were in the early 1980s. But now, students are paying four times as much as they did then. Imagine paying more every year for tickets on an airline whose planes flew slower and crashed more frequently, but that spent its revenue on one hell of a nice terminal and lounge instead. Would you put that sticker on your car's back window?
37. Any pioneer who chooses to circumnavigate the one-size-fits-all model should be applauded for their courage rather than tattooed as a dunce.
38. The names around the facade of any university library--Plato, Shakespeare, Keats, Austen, Shelly, Dickens, Whitman, Dickinson--no college.
39. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven. Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis. The Beatles--no college.
40. Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Vermeer--no college.
41. Jay Z, Kanye, Drake.
42. The Wright brothers--with a home library, no college degrees, and a bike shop--kicked off the age of flight. Their main competitor, Samuel P. Langley, a professor of mathematics with grants from the U.S. government and the Smithsonian, crashed into the Potomac.
43. A third of billionaires don't have college degrees.
44. The current system of higher education perpetuates inequalities in wealth and power. End discrimination in hiring or admissions to any program based on having already received a credential. No discrimination in jobs based on prior schooling.
45. A government of the people, by the people, for the people, but only if they have a BA should perish from the Earth. The Federal government--with its GS payscale that rewards useless credentials--organizes a vast network of discrimination and raises costs by preventing otherwise talented people from working in the public sector. If smart criminals can elude the FBI without college degrees, then the FBI shouldn't require them either. Abraham Lincoln ended slavery without a college degree. Good governance requires no credential.
46. "The discipline of colleges and universities is in general contrived, not for the benefit of the students, but for the interest, or more properly speaking, for the ease of the masters." Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*
47. The university rewards researchers over teachers.
48. The people who give exams or evaluate essays and the people who teach should not be one and the same. Creating the best content for people to learn and creating a system to certify that people have achieved some level of mastery are two different problems. By fusing them into one, universities curtail freedom of thought and spark grade inflation. Critical thinking is currently mistaken for finding out what the professor wants to hear and saying it.
49. Let some portion of tuition be spent on Patreon or similar platforms. We would see more diversity of thought and experimentation in teaching methods, if we let university students divert some portion of their fees to professors whose courses they find valuable, even if these professors are not employed directly by the university. The Universidad Francisco Marroquín in Guatemala took an innovative step by having two business schools on campus compete with each other.
50. Teacher's pay should neither be uniform, nor based on credentials earned, nor on number of years worked. Awful teachers are overpaid and cannot be fired. Great teachers are underpaid. Abolish any system of compensation that attracts the mediocre and uninspiring and repels the imaginative and daring.
51. Licensing is a tool to obtain and enforce monopoly. Treat it no differently from Standard Oil or Microsoft. Trade unions--including doctors, lawyers and NYC hotdog carts--maintain higher incomes by limiting the number of people who can perform the work. Medical schools, law schools, and other professional schools should drop a college degree as a requirement. Professional organizations that determine license requirements should drop the college degree as requisite. We must fight the use of admissions to limit the number of doctors, lawyers, nurses, and so on.
52. While we're at it, overthrow the medieval guild system of lawyers, professors, doctors, architects, landscape architects, pharmacists, acupuncturists, embalmers, naturopaths, yoga instructors, hair stylists, cosmetologists, real estate agents, insurance agents, private investigators and anyone else who inflates the price of their services by outlawing competition with bureaucratic charters. Many licensing boards use irrelevant considerations--matters that have no relation to skill or competence--in determining who can work a job. Certification combined with systems of credit and reputation can protect consumers more effectively.
53. Teach the courage of having your convictions attacked, to attain what is highest and most difficult, to serve individuals, not systems, to save civilization from utter destruction.
54. The liberal arts and what colleges call the liberal arts are as different as civilization and insolent barbarism.
55. What good is all the philosophy in the world if it keeps you from becoming a philosopher?
56. The professors of subfields within subfields should be recognized as the pin factory workers they are. The academic division of labor, particularly in the humanities, is narrow and screwed, the infinite multiplication of finite banalities.
57. Professors should be better than snowmen. Snowstorms cancelling class tend to bring more joy to students than learning new ideas. What a strange service! Higher education, root canals, rectal exams, and schooling are the only services that consumers rejoice in having cancelled.
58. The philosopher Jason Brennan: "I frequently read articles and books that defend universities by saying something like, 'Universities are not meant to accomplish X, but instead Y' where X is something corporations, politicians, taxpayers, and lay people care about, and Y is some noble high-minded goal, such as preparing people for democracy or creating enlightened minds. But then the people never supply any evidence that universities actually achieve Y, and, oops, over here we have lots of evidence that they don't."
59. "Do you want to be cogs on a wheel driven by a pinion which revolves in obedience to a force outside itself?" --Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard 1869-1909
60. "The No. 1 problem today is not ignorant students but ignorant professors..." Camille Paglia
61. Schooling doesn't improve skills, but rather reveals that you have them. Employers pay degree holders because assessment is hard. We can do better.
62. We may ridicule North Korean generals for having 613 medals on their coats, but baristas with PhDs are different only in degree, not kind. When workers have twice as many credentials for the same job they could have had in the past for none or one, it's time to question the chain of command.

63. Illiterate sailors on a rickety ship overthrew a thousand years of university Aristotelian scholarship in 1492.
64. The more PhDs we mint, the fewer scientific revolutions we seem to have. There are more scientists working today in any time human history. It could be that science is harder or it could be they're not all really scientists.
65. Most published research findings are false. Yup, here's your footnote.
66. "I think the Ph.D. system is an abomination. It was invented as a system for educating German professors in the 19th century, and it works well under those conditions. It's good for a very small number of people who are going to spend their lives being professors. But it has become now a kind of union card that you have to have in order to have a job, whether it's being a professor or other things, and it's quite inappropriate for that. It forces people to waste years and years of their lives sort of pretending to do research for which they're not at all well-suited. In the end, they have this piece of paper which says they're qualified, but it really doesn't mean anything. The Ph.D. takes far too long and discourages women from becoming scientists, which I consider a great tragedy. So I have opposed it all my life without any success at all." -- Freeman Dyson
67. Wall Street's HR Department? The best universities in the world are turning many graduates into krill for too-big-to-fail corporate leviathans. When more than a third of a graduating class disappears each year into the gaping maw of financial services, it begs the question whether Ivy League schools are teaching critical thinking after all.
68. Colleges obsess over inputs and remain silent on outputs. It shouldn't be easier to graduate from Harvard than to be admitted. If the FDA requires labels on all food packages to certify ingredients and nutritional value, then universities should be required to publish all their data on how well their students learn and also the employment and career tracks of recent grads.
69. Picking a college to attend based on its football team is like choosing to stay at a La Quinta because there is a good restaurant next door.
70. End the NCAA's multi-billion dollar con game: clichéd musings on the sanctity of amateur competition aside, we are witnessing--in fact, most are cheering on--the unadulterated exploitation of "student-athletes."
71. The highest paid employee on a college campus is not the Nobel Prize winning scientist. It is not even the president of the university, who often rakes in close to \$2 million-a-year for glad-handing donors. No, the highest paid employee in the ivory tower is often the football coach.
72. The Bro Wage Premium: joining a fraternity lowered GPA by 0.25 points but boosted future income by 36 percent.
73. Where one went to college should not be the most interesting thing about a 22-year-old.
74. The hypocrisy of postmodernism as a philosophy concerned with power structures is that its authority depends on the accredited university.
75. "The eagle never lost so much time as when he submitted to learn of the crow." -- William Blake
76. "Anyone who imagines that all fruits ripen at the same time as the strawberries knows nothing of the grapes." Paracelsus
77. "Hutchins once described the modern university as a series of separate schools and departments held together by a central heating system. In an area where heating is less important and the automobile more, I have sometimes thought of it as a series of individual faculty entrepreneurs held together by a common grievance over parking." -- Clark Kerr, President of the University of California system, 1958-1967
78. Every academic and scientific journal should be open and free to the public. It is much easier to check results for reproducibility with a billion eyes.
79. Schools are squeezing for profits when then require freshmen at schools like MIT to take intro to computer science classes even though the students have been coding for eight years on their own. Let them test out to the edge of their competence.
80. Modern society deprives adults of investing in the future and reflecting on the past by locking up the young and elderly in schools and nursing homes.
81. Imagine you could study physics with Einstein or playwriting with Shakespeare. But part of the deal is you could never say who you studied with or for how long. Or, you could just have a PhD from Harvard. Which would you choose? Which would get you tenure track?
82. The income for the best people in jobs that do not require college degrees--for example, electricians, carpenters, mechanics--is higher than the income for many jobs that list a college degree as a requirement. Some plumbers make more than doctors.
83. We have done more to infantilize young people than to help them mature.
84. Too much of school is about proving that you can show up every day on time, work, and get along with the people around you.
85. Bloodletting and leeches. It is a problem that doctors existed for centuries before medicine. The same asymmetry could be said of teachers and education today.
86. 480,000 yellow school buses out on the road every day, polluting the air, the largest transportation fleet in the country. That's one hell of a 20th century transportation system for a 19th century school system.
87. "Academic politics is the most vicious and bitter form of politics, because the stakes are so low." -- William S. Sayre
88. If the signaling value of a college degree is its most valuable part, then we are creating a society that values the appearance of success more than actual success.
89. Permanent grades on a permanent transcript inculcates a permanent fear of failure.
90. The future is present but invisible. We have to pull it from a place unseen, where no one is looking, through the door no one has tried with the key we have long forgotten. Our future was lost in our past. We can find it.
91. "Remember where you won. Remember where you lost. Wonder why." Glyn Maxwell
92. We are in a crisis. Less school, more freedom.
93. The future of education will be (i) asynchronous, here & there, (ii) decentralized, the best content from wherever, (iii) customized--Aristotle for an army of Alexanders, (iv) attention to measuring improvements (v) accessible to all for cheap, (vi) global
94. We will be judged by generations to come by what we build, not what we consume. Will it survive time better than its maker?
95. Education ought to be a mission not merely to instruct the world but to liberate it.