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Yes / No / Maybe So Proposal

Angle 1: From the angle of abolishing the thesis project, I feel the most solid argument for this perspective is that it is generally unnecessary. After completing over 150 credit hours depending on major and minors, the thesis seems to be an extra nuisance adding onto the final year of studying in which should be the most difficult courses in the curriculum. Once a student can work on their thesis, they should be at the point in their schedule where the classes should be the main focus, and not an extracurricular project that is simply tacked onto the curriculum for the sake of “proving one’s knowledge”, as it should be evident through their studies whether they comprehend their line of education or not. There does not seem to be many people that prioritize writing their thesis, but it is essentially a final bottleneck separating some people from officially graduating.

Angle 2: The argument to keep the thesis project as is would have their strongest argument in the fact that if you can make it as far as to graduate, one more project should not stop you. Especially one that you are able to design to your liking and in the end have full control over what you are testing and studying. The thesis is used to show a cumulation of knowledge, and the ability to combine skills from both the sciences and the arts or writing aspects of a professional life and education. Being able to use everything learned through earning your degree should make a thesis project easy for those who are well rounded in all aspects of their education. A thesis is also something that the student should be proud of finishing, and it goes to show that the hard work and dedication to not only their education, but that they also have the drive to search for knowledge outside of just the classroom.

Angle 3: The argument for changing the thesis I feel has the largest amount of discussion points. One of the main ideas I have thought of is to change it from a requirement, to more of a scholarship. By agreeing to write a thesis at the end of your degree, you would get some sort of reimbursement on tuition for the efforts, as in exchange you are putting important information into the world on behalf of Kettering and your employer. So, while mainly Kettering benefits in the current situation, this proposed change would incentivize more people to come here if the scholarship is worth the work for the student as well. Another change would be to enable an opt-in or opt-out system, where a potential group of students from each department can be responsible for a part of the thesis per graduating class. Assisting in the thesis study after this change would yield a prestigious honor of having your name on the project, as well as still allowing Kettering to produce meaningful research, and possibly more quality research as these people will be more intrinsically motivated since they have opted into the project.

Primary Research: The most efficient way to find out the opinions of others on this topic would be to design a survey. Including many questions like “are you okay with the current state of the thesis project?” and “would you be more willing to write a thesis if it were optional, but you were offered compensation for the time put into the project?”. Having a few questions for each angle and then allowing the subject to write any thoughts they have on the topic would be an ideal case and designing a way to send out the study to random students enrolled in the university. A simple google document sent to a list of random emails from the student list would suffice in giving a proper sample of student opinions on the thesis that can be generalized to the larger population.

Secondary Research: Doing general research on the thesis projects from Kettering would help get a grasp on the situation of thesis writing. Some key information to look for would be to find the percentage of people that complete the required credits, but do not graduate due to not completing their thesis, or finding the monetary gain that comes as a result of students completing their thesis through the eyes of Kettering and the students. If any information about the professor’s or administration’s thoughts about the thesis is available, it could be compared to those thoughts found through the student surveys. This sort of fact-based research would be usable in each angle, depending on which aspect is being focused on and the research can be based around that topic. For example, in voting to abolish the thesis project, a useful piece of information would be the rate at which students complete their curriculum but fail to graduate due to not completing their thesis. While the argument for keeping the thesis as is would be supported with information based on the tradition of Kettering’s thesis project or finding out whether a large portion of employers look at the candidate’s thesis as productive.