



George Tyson <georgestyson@gmail.com>

A response to Johnston Dantzler

George Tyson <georgestyson@gmail.com>
To: George Tyson <georgestyson@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 1:23 PM

From: Johnston
Sent: Monday, February 15, 2021 5:50 PM
To: Peter Moore
Subject: Peter to JD: "Thanks, my friend" - Nov 13th, '20

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 13, 2020, at 9:41 PM, Peter Moore wrote:

I've started a message to you and hit "delete" several times, and I'm determined to finish it this time, even though it's barely coherent and certainly not well organized. I have not been on the address list for some of the dialogue concerning Wofford and the current issues, but I've read some very eloquent remarks by Dickie Myers, John Nordt, Jack Kaplan, and James Talley, and other voices, and I've had some conversations with alumni and some current and retired faculty.

Underneath it all, the redeeming factor for me, is that there is a deep connection among many of us who experienced Wofford, and, although we accept and promote change, we hope to preserve, protect, and promote the core essence of this place, where we boys became men, and where the intellectual and spiritual challenges have endured, and grown, over the years.

For relatives, friends, children of friends, and gifted youth, I've constantly and gently guided men and women toward Wofford, for a "real" college experience, which we had, characterized by dormitories, small classes, relationships with students and remarkable faculty, and socialization with diverse and amazing peers. The whole concept, unfortunately, is a dinosaur. Innumerable colleagues can't name a friend from college days, many have severed whatever connection they ever had with their college or university.

So many private colleges, especially, have deteriorated over the years. Their glitzy publications appeal to those who naively believe that enrolling there will lead to happiness and professional occupations. Admission standards have been lowered, and recruitment focuses upon numbers rather than qualifications. During retirement, I taught adjunct classes at a number of colleges. Sometimes, because I wanted to reach students who seemed detached, I'd go to the registrar's office and ask to look at the admission file, wondering if there could be a learning disability, ADHD, or some type of condition prohibiting understanding and involvement. Almost invariably, the records showed exceptionally low aptitude scores, low grades, and no sign of college preparatory courses. When I'd ask, "What was it about this student that identified him/her as a good candidate for enrollment?" The response was almost always the same: "You don't really understand, do you?" I caught on pretty quickly, though; it was about student loans and ability to pay tuition, and consenting to apply to this institution. Most left, with serious feelings of failure, but the college had achieved its goal: payment. Some of these wonderful young people would have been very successful in technical and vocational programs, but they drifted toward the fast-food sector, feeling unable to do anything else.

In many of my classes, I'd devote some time to discussion and questions about some of the topics we were studying. Without stereotyping all students, it was depressing and futile. The questions were more about the upcoming test, or about grades, or about earning extra credit. When some students performed poorly, attended irregularly, or did not pass the course, the burden was upon me to prove their failure, or outline whatever measures I'd done to try to prevent their inadequate work. Conferences often involved parents, especially when an athlete was involved, and might be in jeopardy of losing his scholarship.

Back to Wofford: There are some alarming trends and circumstances that must be addressed, rather than avoided. No group, whether student or faculty-led, should be making "demands" of the community, other than the demand to improve quality of education, acceptance of others, and listening. Making a "demand" is quite different from "let's discuss this and make some plans."

In my interviews and calls with alumni from various years, mostly minority, several critical items emerged: almost all valued the great educational experience; nearly all had great respect for most of the staff; oddly, several staff and faculty names were repeatedly mentioned as inappropriate and condescending. This came across from several decades of students, who didn't know each other. I have to wonder if the administration has examined this and evaluated the situation. Some of

the complaints are pretty alarming, and, if validated, would suggest reprimand or removal.

I didn't mean to write a novel. In essence, I can't face the concept of Wofford becoming an elitist, self-congratulating institution, promising open doors to graduate programs and corporate jobs, while costing \$60,000 per year from families who must scrape, borrow, and beg for assistance. I do not want to see the decline that I've seen in sister schools and colleges; It's very critical to me that alumni, staff, students, and faculty come together, stop "demanding" things, and work as a team to foster and promote teamwork, in creating an accepting environment in which all can participate and thrive. That's where I am; there's much more, but it's late.

All Good Wishes from here. Hope to see you soon.

Peter

Sent from Mail for Windows 10