

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT A COLLEGE PROGRAM?

By Jack Geary

A college or university education is very expensive. The costs are inflationary and always exceed the rate of inflation. Therefore, it would appear reasonable that you would want to know as much about the 'product' as possible. You need to know how the educational system works. If you remain ignorant, you will be blindly navigating some very treacherous waters. There are alligators, sharks and other student-eating fish in these waters. You will be breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks!

I would think that since you are enrolled in a college you would want to be an intelligent consumer of educational services. You can begin keeping ahead of the curve by reading cover to cover at least two colleges catalogues thoroughly. Select a large university and a small college. For instance, at the minimum you need to know:

- What are 'catalogue rights?'
- What are the policies about dropping a class without getting an 'F' or 'W' grade?
- How do you know if you may be over your head academically in class?
- What is Work Experience Program?
- How do you determine if credits completed at another college are accepted?
- Where do you find out scholarships, requirements and application deadlines?
- How do you obtain verification of your credits towards a degree or certificate program at the SRJC, especially if you attended another college or served in the military?
- Who controls what credits are transferable?
- Will training in the military count towards a degree?
- How do you determine the essential courses needed for a degree or certificate program?

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS WHO WILL LIVE AWAY FROM HOME

- If you do not live at home are you covered by your parent's medical insurance and auto liability insurance? Parents have a purpose!
- If you lease an apartment with another student, who is left holding the bag if the other student skips town and stops paying rent (and they will!)?
- Where do you clean your laundry- one of those nasty chores?
- Where do you eat on a regular basis without donating an arm and a leg?
- If you live in an 'animal house' with other students can you trust that the food in the refrigerator is safe and edible?
- If the telephone line is in your name, then who is legally responsible for paying for long distance calls of the co-tenant(s)? Do not take out a telephone line in your name if other students have access to the line for long distance calls! Use a cell phone or the Internet!
- Never give anyone important passwords, pin numbers, and guard credit cards.
- How does a college rate a high school? Not all high schools are equal.