

# COLGATE SEEN *vol. II*

*A publication of Students & Alumni for Colgate, Inc.*

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Open letter to Joanne D. Spigner, president of  
the Colgate Alumni Corporation Board of Directors

Accountability to Colgate  
**ALUMNI**  
Initiative

April 20, 2007  
Dear Ms. Spigner,

After three years of involvement with Students & Alumni for Colgate, Inc., (SA4C) I know more about the inner workings and policy decisions at Colgate University than I ever knew as a member of the Board of Trustees. **Back then, the administration was selective about what it fed us, and little has changed in that regard.**

What I've learned about Colgate's policies toward Greek life, private property ownership, academic freedom and intellectual diversity are deeply disturbing. I think you might be concerned as well.

But it doesn't matter what I, or you, or 33,000 alumni, or 2,779 students think. That's because **the Board of Trustees is accountable to no one.** They don't have to be, and they aren't. After hundreds of letters from alumni, protests from students, even litigation, the Board of Trustees still isn't listening. They don't have to.

**The Accountability to Alumni Initiative** has launched a **petition effort** to ask the Board of Trustees to **change the By-laws to allow 18 of the 35 members to be voted by the alumni** in a free and fair election. Once the by-law change is made, the new Board would be prohibited from changing either the By-law allowing the election by alumni, or the composition of the Board, without a vote of the alumni.

**To leverage the petition**, we've established a special "**Accountability to Alumni Fund**" through the nationally recognized Donors Trust ([www.donorstrust.org](http://www.donorstrust.org)). Alumni may make tax-deductible contributions to the Fund. Funds will be invested by Merrill Lynch and held for up to five years to September 1, 2012. **When the Board of Trustees makes the By-laws change to allow open elections, the funds will be distributed to the college. If they fail to make the change, the monies will go to other beneficiaries previously named by the donors.**

I am pleased with the support we've received in the initial stages of this Initiative. It seems to me that the Colgate Alumni, as represented by the Corporation Board of Directors, would favor more influence in the governance process of Colgate. Would you kindly discuss this proposal with the Board and let me know at your earliest convenience whether the Board will support our proposed change to the By-laws?

Yours truly,



Charles H. Sanford '58, Trustee *emeritus*  
President, Students & Alumni *for* Colgate, Inc.

***This is a constructive way to support Colgate University and instill transparency and accountability for the financial, academic and social policies instituted at the college.***

***Why shouldn't the Board of Trustees be accountable to the more than 50 % of alumni who fund the school, and the 65% or so of parents and students who pay full fare?***

***Alumni have earned the right to vote for half of the Board of Trustees.***

# Colgate University 2006-2007 Faculty Analysis

(Read the full reports at  
[www.votecolgatetrustees.org/core.htm](http://www.votecolgatetrustees.org/core.htm))

361 faculty members are listed in 2006-2007 Course Catalog (does not include university library faculty, athletic department faculty, non-teaching emeritus or staff). **252 or 69.8% taught Fall 2006. 35 (13.8%) were visiting faculty.**

57 CORE classes were offered. 16 classes or 28% were taught by visiting faculty or special instructors.

## Political Party Affiliation by Division

	Total	Democrat # (%)	Not Registered # (%)	Unaffiliated # (%)	Republican # (%)	Green # (%)	Conservative # (%)
University Studies	20 (7%)	5 (25%)	11 (55%)	3 (15%)		1 (5%)	
Social Sciences	74 (27%)	29 (41%)	30 (41%)	6 (6%)	6 (6%)	2 (3%)	1 (1%)
Natural Sciences	68 (25%)	30 (44%)	18 (26%)	13 (19%)	7 (10%)		
Humanities	90 (33%)	44 (49%)	37 (41%)	6 (7%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	
Administration	22 (8%)	14 (64%)	2 (9%)	3 (14%)	3 (14%)		

The average number of classes taught Fall 2006 per faculty member was 2.8. For the handful of faculty who taught more than three classes, it was common to be teaching the same class at two different times to different students. 707 classes, labs (counted per the Colgate standard as 1/3 of

one course), independent studies, or senior theses divided by 252 faculty who taught = 2.8).

The normal course load per faculty member is five (5) classes taught over a nine-month, two-semester school year.

## Core Curriculum and Politics in the Classroom Poll Results from the Classes of 2004-2008

SA4C commissioned a poll conducted by Public Opinion Strategies of Alexandria, VA. View the entire poll at [http://www.votecolgatetrustees.org/poll\\_04-08.htm](http://www.votecolgatetrustees.org/poll_04-08.htm)

More than 3,300 students and alumni from the Classes of 2004-2008 – those with recent experience with the curriculum and thus have a credible opinion - were invited in four e-mails to participate in the survey. Participants could only respond once and were blinded to the polling company, meaning particular responses cannot be linked to a specific person. **478 people responded with a margin of error of 4.45%.** (If the poll were repeated, the results would be the same by plus or minus 4.45%.)

The fact that such a large number of participants self-identify as being liberal (50%) or moderate (31%) makes the results even more telling. Even this group of left to middle-leaning thinkers believes the liberal arts curriculum is lacking in math, science and economics and even they see political bias in the classroom. Male respondents were under-represented by 8% and Greek-letter respondents were underrepresented by 33%, making the statistics even more interesting.

(Public Opinion Strategies is a nationally respected firm with clients across the political spectrum. They are part of the polling team for *NBC/Wall Street Journal* and *National Public Radio*.)

### Key Findings of the poll

While students and alumni say that overall they feel their Colgate education prepared them for their chosen career, majorities (66%, 62%, 55% respectively) responded that the core curriculum in economics, math, and foreign language were inadequate. 47% said science classes and 41% said American history and civics classes were inadequate. Only literature and writing scored as adequate preparation (89%, 91% respectively).

Significant pluralities of respondents – and overwhelming majorities of the conservative minority on campus – say some professors are intolerant of certain political and social viewpoints (45%-69%), present controversial issues in a one-side manner (40%-67%), and they have felt pressure to muzzle their own views (30%-56%).

The overwhelming majority of students (64%) and alumni (70%) affiliated with a sorority or fraternity have felt the need to hide their Greek affiliation, a phenomenon seemingly unnoticed by non-Greek students/alumni.

The cost of tuition, room and board, fees and books has increased steadily from 1999 to 2007 by an incredible 47.4% placing Colgate University in the top one percent of most expensive colleges in the nation. Source: *Treasurer's Report by David Hale, January 25, 2004; College Board 2005.*

Yet, incredibly, Colgate University fails to be included in the Top 50 Feeder schools for graduate programs in business, law and medicine.

This is particularly disconcerting when 11 of the 22 comparable colleges that Colgate ranks itself against made the top 50. Those top feeder schools (and their ranking) include: Williams College (5); Amherst College (9); Swarthmore College (10); Wellesley College (15); Haverford College (18); Bowdoin College (19); Middlebury College (23); Wesleyan University (27); Vassar College (31); Colby College (44); Washington and Lee (48).

According to Dean of the College Charlotte Johnson, "Colgate is preparing students to be successful engaged citizens who have skills in critical and analytical thinking, and the ability to write well and speak well, to build interpersonal relationships and walk across differences. All of these things are equally important."

Four-years at Colgate costs upwards of \$176,000. In addition to being taught to "walk across differences," isn't it fair to expect that a Colgate degree ensures a well-rounded education – in all the traditional areas of a liberal arts education?

"The Public Opinion Strategies poll concludes that the core curriculum does not provide an adequate foundation in economics, math, and foreign languages. Core-curricula (at Colgate and other institutions) are not designed to provide college-level instruction in these areas."

-04/04/2007

Colgate University  
PR and Communications Department

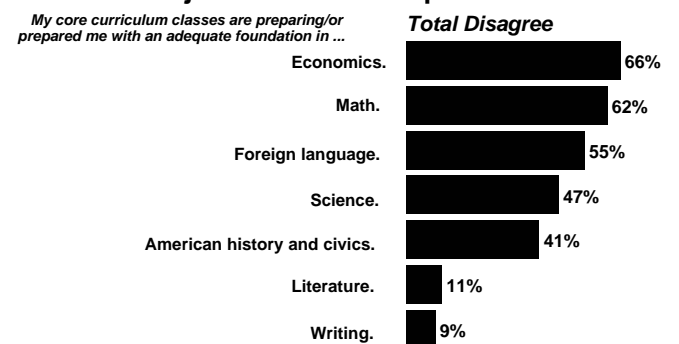
Across all majors, students and alumni say that the core curriculum does not provide solid foundations in the majority of subject areas tested.

% Disagree By Major

My core curriculum classes are preparing/or prepared me with an adequate foundation in...	Humanities (22%)	Science/Math (26%)	Social Sciences (43%)
Economics	73%	66%	59%
Math	61%	59%	64%
Foreign Language	54%	55%	55%
Science	49%	40%	50%
American history and civics	43%	51%	36%
Literature	8%	13%	12%
Writing	4%	11%	10%

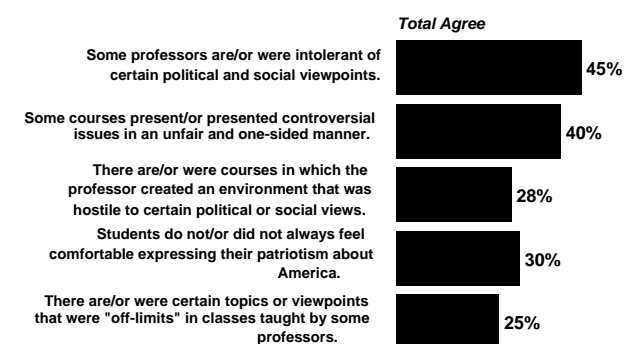
Please select if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements regarding your undergraduate studies on your college campus.

While nearly all students and alumni agree that the core curriculum provides an adequate foundation in writing and literature, most other subject areas need improvement.



Please select if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements regarding your undergraduate studies on your college campus.

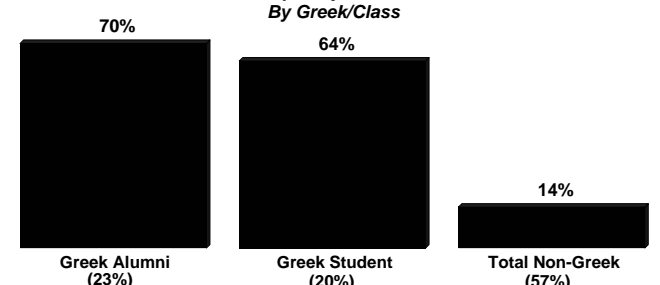
Significant pluralities of students and alumni say that some professors have presented one-sided or biased opinions related to political issues.



Please select if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements regarding your undergraduate studies on your college campus.

Two-thirds of those pledged to a fraternity or sorority said they don't feel free to show that affiliation- an experience not recognized by non-Greek students.

% Frequently/Sometimes By Greek/Class



Please select how often each of the following occurred in your experience as an undergraduate on campus - frequently, sometimes, rarely or never. "Students do not/ or did not always feel free to show their affiliation with a fraternity or sorority."

## A Brief History and Motivation

By Tim Sanford,  
'58 Trustee *emeritus*,  
President, Students & Alumni  
for Colgate, Inc.

"It is difficult to understand the hostility so many colleges have toward alumni who are vigorous and devoted," writes William F. Buckley in "The High Cost of Loving Dartmouth" (April 10, 2007, *Townhall.com*).

Buckley continues, "Social observers have to acknowledge that there is a role for independent-minded alumni trustees. I prophesied that the role of the trustee would one day become a matter of earnest alumni concern, roiling the waters, and this certainly has happened at Dartmouth College."

Most of you have received an e-mail from Colgate accusing SA4C of trying to discredit the college. This is certainly not our intent! **Our mission is to improve the educational experience of the Colgate student.** But we're not shy to say that the Emperor has no clothes.

(Note the *Report from a Student*, printed herein, who, for fear of retribution requests anonymity.)

Note John Kelly, '08, who writes in the *Maroon News* (2/8/07), "Colgate students as Raider fans are downright pathetic. Although Colgate ranks 16th in the liberal arts college list in the *US News & World Report*, this school is 365th – dead last – our of Division I universities in basketball attendance." Kelly quotes Bucknell Bison's Coach Pat Flannery, "Coming into a place like Colgate is really tough. It makes it hard to play with intensity when the seats are basically empty and the stands so quiet. It was such a contrast to our home court on Saturday and it was a let-down coming in here."

What has happened to the Colgate spirit we all knew? Is this symptomatic of bigger problems?

In *Colgate SEEN, Vol. I*, we published (with permission) an article by Stanley C. Brubaker, professor of political science. (If you would like a copy of Vol. 1, let us know and we will get it to you.)

Professor Brubaker wrote, "Last fall, Democracy Matters sponsored a panel discussion on the question, 'How Diverse is Colgate?' 'Not very,' was my answer. 'Not very, and certainly not enough for Colgate to fulfill its mission, not enough to foster informed civic engagement, and not enough if Colgate deserves to be America's leading liberal arts university.' I was speaking, of course, of intellectual diversity – diversity of ideas and ideals."

Fiscal Year May 31	Student Enrollment	Student Tuition, Room, Board, Fees (Books/personal expenses not included estimate \$1,710 -\$2K)	Percent Increase in Tuition, Room, Board, Fees from previous year	Student Financial Aid	Percent of all students Receiving Financial Aid
1998-1999	2,505	\$29,950		\$18,237,923	40%
1999-2000	2,811	\$31,080	3.8%	\$19,216,842	41%
2000-2001	2,718	\$32,070	3.2%	\$20,430,000	
2001-2002	2,917	\$33,480	4.4%	\$21,264,000	38%
2002-2003	2,725	\$35,130	4.9%	\$24,341,000	39%
2003-2004	2,750	\$37,095	5.6%	\$25,518,000	39%
2004-2005	2,824	\$39,060	5.3%	\$27,387,000	39%
2005-2006	2,771	\$41,170	5.1%		48%
2006-2007	2,779	\$43,558 *	5.8%		

Source: Colgate University audited financial reports  
Tuition for 2007-2008 is anticipated to increase by at least 5.8%, bringing the total student fees to \$44,171.

As many of you know, Colgate's Trustees adopted a "strategic plan" several years ago; it was accompanied by much ballyhoo and fan fair.

In the small print was a requirement that all students shall live in university-owned housing (except, interestingly, 250 seniors who would be granted permission to live in off-campus housing not owned by Colgate.)

The Trustees authorized the Colgate Administration to go to the boards of the alumni corporations that owned the individual fraternity and sorority houses and demand that the properties be sold to Colgate upon threat that their Greek-letter organization would be put out of business by the College. The courts upheld Colgate's such heavy-handed tactic to acquire property (although a lawsuit by Mu of DKE is still under appeal.) In my view, Colgate acted in a very unprincipled and unethical manner.

Students and Alumni for Colgate, Inc. (SA4C) was formed in an effort to "push back", allowing the alumni corporations to retain ownership of their properties. The Trustees ignored any efforts to thwart their unconscionable action.

In paying attention to the Board of Trustees, talking with students, faculty, staff and alumni, analyzing the curriculum, and reviewing ranking reports from objective third parties, **it is clear that Colgate has gotten off-track, and it's the students who are cheated.** Yet, I hear from some that, "Colgate has never been stronger." I disagree.

The Trustees are touting the "Passion for the Climb!" - Colgate's \$400 million capital campaign. Everything's rosy – just read the glossy brochures. You're expected to dig deep into your wallet, but don't expect your voice to be heard.

Analysis of the governance system at Colgate is not rocket science. **The Board is selected by a small group of insiders, is accountable only to themselves, and to hell with what the Alumni may wish.**

Many alumni think this situation should be changed. SA4C contends that the time has come for Colgate alumni to demand true representation on the Board of Trustees through fair and impartial elections.

**It is my hope that the Accountability to Colgate Alumni Initiative will be a vehicle to give you a rightful say in how our alma mater is governed, and by whom.**

There is much about Colgate University that is great. But, there are serious problems as well. A liberal arts education, for many of us, is the launch pad to a good graduate school. *The Wall Street Journal* prepares an objective list of the "Top 50 feeder schools" and Colgate fails to be included – while 11 of the 22 colleges Colgate ranks as its peers make the grade. So what does \$176,000 buy a student at Colgate? Think about it!

I hope you will agree with me that Colgate's By-law on governance is from the Dark Ages. **Please sign the petition as a first step in effecting valid alumni input to lead Colgate.**

### Diversity at Colgate

**Gender – and gender preference - has been politicized on campus. One Colgate professor observes, "the new push is gay activism, including a proposed Queer Studies minor.** A new newsletter, *Out & About*, is published for campus-wide distribution by a professor who is a gay activist. Last year, the first annual Big Gay Weekend was scheduled for Easter Weekend, including a Drag Ball and Drag Queen on Holy Saturday. Anyone who criticizes this is called homophobic and bigoted.

"This is the way the university works -- how "diversity" stifles free discussion and creates intellectual conformity using the language of tolerance. **It is a bit Orwellian -- diversity means conformity to liberal orthodoxy and free speech means shutting down debate.**"

Prompted by a November 2001 sit-in by students "of color," Colgate has

Feb. 2, 2007

**Dr. Chopp:**

Re: In your letter, "The balance of leadership" (Colgate Scene, January 2007), you say "Colgate was founded by people with the do-something spirit..." Wouldn't it be more historically accurate and honest to acknowledge the University was founded by 13 men, or does the purity and alleged sensitivity of political correctness deny truth, also? Our alumni classes had a "Can do" spirit; "do-something" is hardly a positive pedagogical lesson to teach.

As to "balance," you constantly point to the Center for Freedom and Western Civilization - the only example of intellectual diversity on campus. You have dismissed ROTC, but as a matter of basic fact, isn't it the military that provides faculty the freedom to express their views – anti-military or otherwise?

You claim, "The purpose of a liberal arts education is to teach one how to stretch intellectually, connect ideas and people, and center one's own values and beliefs." Your message is well intended but demonstrates an educator's lack of real world experience. Students face reality when emerging from campus, and all the sweet talk and political correctness issued from classrooms and college authority do not provide mature guidance for the new, challenging, highly competitive working world. Time to reassess the curriculum?

-Ed Ross, Spring, TX

established a major diversity initiative with two parts: a Council on Diversity, to work for "structural and cultural change" and a Scholarship Initiative "to reimagine the liberal arts in the context of diversity."

The College recently established a new office and hired an assistant within the Dean of the College Division to focus on LGBTQ issues. Recognized nationally as a "gay-friendly" university, Colgate offers a "lavender" graduation ceremony to honor gay and lesbian students.

The First-Year Students of 2006 (the term "freshman" is politically incorrect) is comprised of 56% women and 44% men. 23.5% are self-identified as coming from multi-cultural backgrounds. According to *US News & World Report* in their annual college rankings, 17% is considered "diverse" with respect to per capita ratios of high school graduates, college applications, and the national population.

# Accountability to Colgate ALUMNI Initiative

www.VoteColgateTrustees.org

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q. What exactly is the Accountability Initiative?

The Accountability to Alumni Initiative has two parts: the petition and the Accountability Fund. We've launched a **petition effort** to ask the Board of Trustees to **change the By-laws to allow 18 of the 35 members to be voted by the alumni** in a free and fair election.

### Q. Why should the Trustees pay attention to a petition?

To leverage the petition, we've established a special **"Accountability to Colgate University Alumni Fund" through the nationally recognized Donors Trust** (www.donorstrust.org). **Alumni may make tax-deductible contributions to the Fund.** Funds will be invested by Merrill Lynch and held for up to five years to September 1, 2012. **At this time, we are only asking for pledges to the Fund.**

**When the Board of Trustees makes the By-laws change to allow open elections, the funds will be distributed to the college for use in academic programs in the areas of math, physical sciences, economics, and American history** -the weakest areas of the curriculum. **If they fail to make the change, the monies will go to other beneficiaries previously named by the donors.**

**Q: What's the history on the Accountability Initiative?** The Accountability Initiative is a constructive approach to protect the future of Colgate University. The idea was spawned after hundreds of e-mails, phone calls and meetings between alumni frustrated that the Board of Trustees refuses to listen, negotiate in good faith, or consider a balanced and transparent approach to policy-making at the college.

The premise is simple: Colgate University is not "owned" by the tight circle of the president, provost/dean of the faculty, dean of the college, or executive and nominating committees of the Board of Trustees, even though virtually every financial, academic and structural policy decision is authored and passed by this handful of people. We've heard from hundreds of alumni who say they'll never contribute to Colgate again. This isn't good.

**The Board of Trustees' "just trust us" attitude is not a strategy that's working. To change the governance of Colgate, we have to change the way the Board of Trustees is selected.**

### Q. Is there a model for electing university trustees?

A Board of Regents elected by voters typically governs public colleges and universities. This is in recognition that public institutions are accountable to the folks who pay most of the bills – the taxpayers.

Some private colleges, such as Colby, Duke, Hamilton, Oberlin, Wesleyan and Colgate allow a few "alumni trustees". Famously, Dartmouth alumni – around the turn of the 19th century – withheld donations until alumni were given the right to elect the trustees. Such elections have provided leadership that has kept the university in high regard. At Harvard, both the Corporation Board and the "alumni trustees" of the Board of Overseers approve major teaching and administrative appointments.

### Q. How is the Colgate Board of Trustees currently selected?

There is a secret nomination by a seven-member Nominating Committee; only three members are required

for a quorum. Nominees are always unanimously ratified by the full Board. Trustees serve for three years and may be re-elected twice, for a total of nine years. The Board has the option to re-elect members beyond three terms and have several times. Most recently, John Golden served for 13 years from 1997 to 2007 and as chairman from 2001-2007.

### Q. Isn't a seat on the Board of Trustees a way to reward major donors?

This change to the By-laws is reasonable, as it would still allow 17 trustees to be selected by the Board recognizing that they may wish to recruit members with certain areas of expertise or to reward significant donors.

### Q. How would the election for the Board of Trustees be handled?

One hundred signatures from Colgate University alumni would be required to place a name in nomination.

Colgate would refrain from campaigning for its slate or would be required to give equal access to its database for other nominated candidates.

"Alumni trustees" selected by the Board of Trustees from the Alumni Corporation Board would be included among the 17 slate candidates chosen by the Trustees.

Once the change to the By-laws is made, the new Board would be prohibited from changing either the By-law allowing the election by alumni, or the composition of the Board, without a vote of the alumni.

### Q. Six members of the Colgate Alumni Corporation Board of Directors serve on the Board of Trustees. Isn't that sufficient?

"When I'm giving my money away, I want to see that it's spent wisely."

- James H. Higgins,  
former CEO,  
Mellon Bank Corporation

A secret nominating committee chooses the Alumni Corporation Board slate. There is a provision for the slate to be contested, but, as was demonstrated in 2006, the Administration slate will always win in the current system that makes a mockery of free and fair elections.

In the 2006 election, Colgate used its significant resources to campaign against the eight independent candidates – all of whom lost the election due in part, to a lack of equal access to the Colgate database, artificial deadlines and arbitrary rules about balloting. Even with these institutionalized barriers, the independent candidates received about 33% of the votes cast – more than "just a few disgruntled alumni," as described by the Colgate administration.

The Alumni Corporation Board selects six of its handpicked members to serve on the Board of Trustees. They

are limited to two, three-year terms. Traditionally, Alumni Board Trustees do not serve on the Executive, Nominating and Finance committees – the real power on the Board.

### Q. What's the agenda? Why upset the status quo?

**Our agenda is simple: bring balance, transparency and accountability to Colgate University.** Students benefit from exposure to diversity – intellectual as well as Colgate's focus on race, ethnicity and varying gender-preferences. Our mission is simple: we want to improve the educational experience of students at the 'Gate.

### Q. How can I help?

**Read more at www.VoteColgateTrustees.org. Sign the petition. Make a pledge to the Accountability to Colgate Alumni Fund. Tell your Colgate friends.**

## Curricular Structure and Administration Growth at Colgate University

Feb. 16, 2007

American Council of Trustees and Alumni - www.goacta.org

"A strong core curriculum should, to the extent possible, ensure that students finely hone their basic skills and learn the most important aspects of our heritage, culture, and our world.

"However, despite having what it calls a "Core," Colgate University essentially has no requirements in broad subject areas such as English, math, science and history.

**Students can literally wander for four years at Colgate University and never be exposed to general areas of knowledge—the very hallmark of a liberal education!** A student can graduate from Colgate University without ever taking a course in American history, without ever studying economics, without ever being exposed, in the words of Matthew Arnold to "the best that has been known and said."

Subject	Required at Colgate University? (Yes/No)
Writing/Composition	No
Literature	No
Foreign Language	Yes
American Government/History	No
Economics	No
Mathematics	No
Natural/Physical Science	No

**"If you don't care if your money goes to support "Vampire Fiction" or "Soap Opera" studies, you can probably just send a check. But if you want to advance education in more sensible ways, attach some strings."**

**Forbes, April 20, 1998**

