

Academia

Nobody asked but ...

I must admit that I am a college faculty member. Worse yet, I work as an adjunct instructor for a state-funded community/technical system of colleges. But let me hasten to add that there are many independent thinkers among my colleagues. The wrong-headedness that rolls out from campuses is the work of a small part of Academia. There is a cautionary rule of thumb that says the unnecessary work done tends to expand to fill the time allotted. This is an expansion of Parkinson's Law, "Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion." I disagree somewhat — a good deal of work never gets done because the stealing of time makes a fictional abundance of time appear to be available. In fact, time is filled by the looping of the most trivial pursuits available; for instance, meetings and the minting of organs designed to generate meetings. I ran into a case of this bureaucracy this week. I was advised by a minion of "Big Publishing," that by virtue of my selecting an "end date" for my courses, I have shut off all student access after that date to eText resources bought and paid for by the students. (I rest assured that the fine print on the web pages that contain "I agree" check boxes renders contractual the small theft). As a bibliophile who never sold a textbook back to the bookstore, I may be overreacting ... but I don't think so. The sales rep for the publisher told me, "Unfortunately due to copyright laws, [keeping your eText] is not possible." This is both untrue, in an equity sense, and incomplete, in an explanatory sense.

— Kilgore Forelle