

The Final Round¹

Everett Rutan

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This House believes that college is overvalued.

A Note about the Notes

These are my notes from the final round at Fitch High School in Groton. They are limited by how quickly I could write and how well I heard what was said. I apologize for any errors, but I hope debaters will appreciate this insight: what a judge hears may not be what the debater said or thinks they said.

There are two versions of the notes. The one below is chronological, reproducing each speech in the order in which the arguments were made. It shows how the debate was presented. The second is formatted to look more like my written flow chart, with each contention “flowed” across the page as the teams argued back and forth. It’s closer to the way I take notes during the debate.

The Final Round

The final round at Fitch was between the Pomperaug teams of Ari Levins and Juliana Yang on the Government against Julia Vela and Rachel Mikush on the Opposition. The debate was won by the Opposition.

1) Prime Minister Constructive

- a) My Father had no college, successful videographer
 - i) College degree does not measure success
- b) Introduction/motion
- c) Definition: TH is average high school student
 - i) “overvalued” measured by skills earned and cost
- d) G1²: College has become overly expensive
 - i) Pre-college costs: tutoring, elite pre-schools, AP Tests, private school
 - ii) Students and parents go into debt
- e) G2: College degrees are becoming less needed for work
 - i) 50% of jobs do not require a degree
 - ii) Save money by not going
 - iii) Still successful, e.g. videographer
- f) G3: College skills don’t translate into the real world
 - i) Better to find you own path
 - (1) Easier to switch careers than college major
 - (2) Required courses/diversity requirements don’t contribute to major
 - ii) Required to have an advisor

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² “G1” indicates the Government first contention, “O2” the Opposition second contention and so forth.

- (1) School isn't like a job
 - (2) Can learn/hone skills with online classes
 - iii) Less need for college skills in work force
 - (1) Increase in salary not worth the extra cost of college
- 2) Leader of the Opposition Constructive**
- a) Intro/motion
 - b) We accept the Gov definitions
 - c) Gov has burden to prove HS graduate is better off than a college graduate
 - d) O1: College helps low income students (LIS)³ rise
 - i) Degree leads to 71% higher earning
 - (1) \$810K vs \$475K over lifetime
 - ii) Scholarships are available
 - (1) Georgetown offers 100% aid
 - iii) Cost/benefits 3:1 for LIS
 - e) O2: College fosters educational exploration
 - i) Many opportunities, hundreds of majors/minors
 - ii) Prepare, enjoy, switch major as Soph or Junior
 - POI: Isn't choosing a major a life-changing decision***
Yes, but lots of opportunities
 - iii) Increased job opportunities
 - (1) Alumni, college career offices help
 - (2) E.g., career office help practice interviews
 - f) O3: College builds skills
 - i) Majors leave to degrees
 - (1) E.g., chemistry, literature, coding skills needed for certain jobs
 - ii) Learn organizational and other general skills
 - (1) Helps if one wants to switch job
 - g) G1: no need for AP's to get into college
 - i) Many high schools provide for free
 - ii) Guidance office provides advice
 - h) G2: IBM opening 50% of jobs to non-college?
 - i) But who actually gets the job?
 - ii) Employers more likely to hire trained worker
- 3) Member of Government Constructive**
- a) Observation: lots of alternative ways to acquire skills
 - b) O1: clashes with G1
 - i) Opp ignores costs before and during college
 - (1) Most are unaware of these
 - ii) Most fail to use opportunity to explore, so wasted
 - iii) Students don't acquire work experience
 - iv) POI rejected
 - v) Scholarships for LIS don't deal with these other issues
 - c) O2: Students forced to declare a major
 - i) Means less exploration
 - ii) Hard to change once college is over

³ Introducing LIS as an abbreviation for "low income students".

- iii) \$50K to explore is a lot of money for parents to pay
- iv) Can explore opportunities while working
 - (1) Can't work while in college
- v) POI: How can you explore if not in college?
 - (1) Other ways, e.g. by working
- d) O3: Special skills?
 - i) Motion "college overvalued"; agree special skills can be valuable
 - ii) "avg HS student" doesn't know what skill are valued
- e) G1: Opp gives one small example
 - i) Ignores other high value impacts by Gov
- f) G2: What do firms value?
 - i) 4 years of work skills or 4 years of college
 - ii) POI rejected
 - iii) Work demonstrates passion/drive
- g) G3: Only real way to explore is to switch careers
 - i) Social pressures in college reduce exploration
- 4) Member of the Opposition Constructive**
 - a) Intro/motion
 - b) G1: Pre-college, even pre-K spending?
 - i) Shows people see value of college
 - ii) Tuition is often covered by need-based scholarships
 - c) G2: Loosening of standards driven by COVID need for workers
 - i) HS v College? Firms hire college
 - ii) College degree give a person options
 - (1) Key to change; no degree often means stuck in job
 - d) G3: students aren't stuck with major/occupation
 - i) Degree gives more opportunities for change
 - ii) Required classes expose students to STEM/English
 - (1) Results in better education
 - iii) Compared to real life degree holders benefit
 - (1) Professors provide research opportunities
 - (2) Class peers introduce to other regions, countries
 - (3) Internships give exposure
 - e) O1: Merit and need scholarships reduce cost
 - i) College gives time to figure life out
 - ii) No ability if you go right to work out of HS
 - f) O2: Students aren't locked into a major, can switch
 - i) Clubs, etc., provide additional activities
 - ii) Degree provides financial stability
 - g) O3: Real world skills?
 - i) You can learn both in college and at work
 - ii) College provides more guidance than work out of HS
 - iii) Most experienced are college students
- 5) Leader of Opposition Rebuttal**
 - a) Employers perspective?
 - i) Hire college grad over HS

- ii) HS grad gets lesser job, lesser experience
- iii) College better for job, personal development
- b) Price of college?
 - i) Great investment, scholarships
- c) Flexibility?
 - i) No need to stay with specific major or career
 - ii) Degree provides options in life
- d) Is HS best?
 - i) College is a good investment
 - ii) Students thrive, opportunity, experience
 - iii) McDonald's v Gov't/Office/Internship
 - iv) No reply on Gov
- 6) Prime Minister Rebuttal**
 - a) Compare college and the workforce
 - i) Classroom gives no work experience
 - (1) Text books? Tests?
 - ii) Work provides real skills
 - (1) Apprenticeships equal to college in learning
 - b) Cost and Aid?
 - i) Aid doesn't cover all costs
 - ii) Avg. college grad is in debt
 - iii) HS no debt and real work experience
 - c) Jobs not just McD's
 - d) Know oneself?
 - i) College student no better off
 - ii) Switch major or switch job
 - e) Magnitude?
 - i) Example of my father
 - ii) HS, no debt, real job experience, same opportunities
 - f) Restate G1, G2, G3