

Sally Struthers returns

Television star's visit has students considering college alternatives

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By Rick Snee

And you may find yourself living in a tripled dorm room. And you may find yourself in a crowded classroom. And you may find yourself parking your car 20 miles away, with Sally Struthers. And you may ask yourself – well, how did I get here?

As the Talking Heads put it, our situation is the “same as it ever was.” Parking is a nightmare, class sizes are not diminishing after at least three years of increased admissions and Sally Struthers is back for her second consecutive year with the theater department.

And you may ask yourself, how are these connected?

Overcrowding at Radford University makes sense. After all, a large number of underage freshmen and transfers will get kicked out for booze and drug violations. That translates into de-tripled rooms and leg room in class. Like a herd of water buffalo, the weaker, drunker caribou are thinned out. The herd runs stronger (and with a better GPA) than ever.

And you're still asking yourself, where the heck am I going with this? Bear with me, jack.

When I first heard Sally Struthers was performing at RU last year, I immediately thought of her last known college gig: offering mail order degrees for veterinarian assistants or gun repair at DeVry. In all fairness to Miss Struthers, I saw *The Fifth of July*, and she was hilarious. Now she's back. There's significance here. I know it.

RU wants students to think about DeVry, or its modern equivalents, Westwood College Online and the University of Phoenix Online. Struthers reminds us of our college alternatives after our third strike. And once you're kicked out of RU with a 0.95 GPA and rap sheet, where can you finish school? I'm not suggesting Westwood's paying RU, but this school does have contracts with everyone from Pepsi to the Christian Travel Agency.

And you may find yourself living in your old bedroom at home, with your computer, learning TV/VCR repair and letting the days go by (like water flowing underground).

According to the Commission for the Future of Radford's Web site, the assembly of students, faculty and administration “[examined] internal and external factors that impact the future of RU” last semester. Sally Struthers is both an internal and external factor. She lends a professional edge to our plays; that's internal. She used to plug learning for cheap at home; that's external.

Does this sound like a conspiracy theory? You bet your boots it does. But consider this: have any of RU's latest construction efforts improved parking, dorm and classroom overcrowding, or late-night dining services? Nope. They have been cosmetic improvements to buildings that are a termite away from implosion. And tuition rates keep increasing.

And you may ask yourself, what is this crack in my wall? And you may ask yourself, where do I get this parking ticket appealed? And you may ask yourself, where did my network connection go? And you may tell yourself, my god! What have I done to deserve this spam in my email account? Sally Struthers may not visit RU “once in a lifetime,” but the rest of us only come get one perspective of this school. Unfortunately, that opinion is “same as it ever was.”

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