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Letter to the Editor

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The Opinion Pages | LETTERS

Life and Experience Make College More Meaningful

DEC. 21, 2014

To the Editor:

Mitchell L. Stevens proposes interesting flexible innovations for

traditional, elite four-year universities. He supports ideas like massive open online courses, or MOOCs, intensive job training and a vague design model to address the “party pathway” that these institutions have become. It is not clear how these ideas will lead to more mature students and reduce the nonstop socializing he describes.

How best to cultivate maturity among young adults? Life and experience.

Those who are not fortunate enough to come from families that can afford such elite institutions, or can’t begin college right after high school for myriad reasons, may have no option but to seek employment, go into the military and either delay college or take a course or two online or at a community college, one term at a time.

I have certainly observed that students at my university, 28 years old on average, come with work, military and life experiences, take their studies seriously and have developed the discipline needed for success. Life experiences are the best ways to enhance maturity.

RACHEL VAN CLEAVE

San Francisco, Dec. 12, 2014

The writer is dean of the Golden Gate University School of Law and a contributing author to a forthcoming book, “Margins & Missions ... Not Moonshots: Pathways to Better U.S. Higher Education.”

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