

# MESEISET

Volume 2, Number 1

April 2013



## Special Edition

## THEY DON'T WANT TO LEARN!

by Guest Editor Alton Higashi

A vast majority of our Chuuk Campus students are categorically (1) those who “struggle” academically in their classes, or (2) those who “don’t care”, according to Student Services Coordinator Maika Tuala. He and his staff collected from faculty “early warning deficiency reports” February 11, 2013, on students in need of academic assistance — those who struggle and those who do not care.

On February 22, Staff Development Day, Mr. Tuala announced that a minimum of 60% of our students were in these two categories. Discussion among participants at the Staff Development Day training failed to define what constitutes “don’t care” students. We know that Mr. Tuala’s announcement initiated baseline data collection; however, we the faculty/staff continue to search for “operational definitions” that can guide us in identifying and minimizing, or eliminating, the criteria that lead to “don’t care” attitudes and behaviors among our students.

In early March SS 150 (History of Micronesia) Instructor Alton Higashi asked his 48 students (in two sections) to describe — honestly — their perceptions of obstacles to student learning at Chuuk Campus. Surprisingly, 12 students (25%) wrote essays to describe why they do not want to learn. Hence, the title of this special edition of Meseiset focuses on student reluctance or resistance to learning. Ten of the 12 essays are included in this special edition. The guest editor took the opportunity to edit their English-writing errors but not their points. Also, names of student writers have been initialized to protect the “guilty”.

This special edition includes two responses to the 10 student essays. They are from Campus Dean Kind Kanto and Student Services Coordinator Maika Tuala.

Finally, this issue ends with two photo albums — Chuuk Campus’ Founding Day, April 1, and Cultural Day, April 2, celebrations, both held at Anderson Field on Weno. Enjoy the photographs. ☐

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### **MESEISET DISCLAIMER POLICY**

Any expression of opinion or viewpoint of the writer(s) of an article in this Meseiset publication is solely the responsibility of the writer(s), not of the COM-FSM system.

**Student Essay #1:**  
**Laziness, “Don’t Care”, and Homesickness**  
by A.P.

I have three reasons why I don’t care. Firstly, I am lazy. Secondly, I don’t care for my lessons. Lastly, I don’t want to learn when I feel homesick.

Let me talk about being lazy. When I do not drink a cup of coffee in the morning, I get lazy. Coffee makes me active. Also, when the instructor gives too much work, I lose interest fast. And, of course, I like to go out at night, and so I put away my studies.

Now, let me talk about why I don’t care. In class I’m not listening because I’m thinking about Facebook. There is another reason for not listening in class. I can’t hear what the instructors are saying.

Finally, let me talk about homesickness. For me, “home” is family and friends. And, yes, I want to spend a lot of time with friends on campus or at home. I feel great spending time with my parents, not with instructors.

I know that I am wrong for being lazy or homesick, and not caring about my lessons. But that is what I am like. ☐

**Student Essay #2:**  
**Lack of English and Shyness/Nervousness**  
by J.S.

I want to learn, but I don’t want to learn at the same time. What’s wrong with me? How can I get out of this mind trap? My problem is a lack of English skills. Then, to make it worse, I am a shy person who gets nervous very quickly in the classroom.

I didn’t learn much English in elementary or high school. So, when I came to Chuuk Campus, I felt mentally handicapped in English-speaking. Every day I am scared — when class begins — because I cannot speak up in class. I want to ask questions, but I don’t. I want to answer the instructor’s questions, but I don’t. I try to read my textbooks or hand-outs, but I just don’t understand so many hard words.

Nobody helps me to get rid of my shyness or nervousness. In fact, my parents think that it is good to be shy and nervous.

As I said before, I have a mind trap. I want to get out of this trap, but I don’t know how to do it. I’m in a prison, and I don’t have the key to unlock the door to get out. I know that I have to improve my English, but I just can’t. ☐

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**Student Essay #3: Laziness, Pride, and “Don’t Care”**  
by M.M.

Many of us at Chuuk Campus do not want to learn. Yes, we know that it is wrong, but three reasons block the paths to solution. My peers and I have talked about this problem — and the solution — but we prefer to be lazy, we have too much pride, and we simply do not care.

I rank laziness as the foremost reason for not wanting to learn. Why? Because we see it everywhere in Chuuk — at home, in government, in business. Growing up in Chuuk means that we grow up lazy. If our role models are lazy, then we should be lazy too. Our families tell us to study hard in school, but too many families themselves do not work hard. They prefer welfare. They support pacification. We see how government workers are sluggish and careless. They talk big and do little. Businesses rise and fall, mostly fall, because private-business employees lack control and ownership of their own futures.

Self-pride is a second reason. Too many students think — wrongly — that they deserve to get an education. Their college degree or diploma should be an automatic reward for attending school. After all, they did that in elementary and secondary schools. They can do it again in college. Now, as men and women, they are too proud to admit that they need help from others, but they will not ask for help. As far as I am concerned, they just “don’t give a shit” about their own future.

This “don’t care” attitude is bad on campus. Student absenteeism goes up, and hanging out with friends goes up too. This is a very common problem because relaxation is more fun than studies. Then, why do students remain on campus? The reason is simple — they want their refunds.

The solution is easy — we have to stop being lazy, we have to stop being too proud, we must start to care. Sure, words are easy, but the actions will not be forthcoming. Too many of us do not want to learn, because we see no value or purpose in our own futures. That is the fundamental problem. ☐

**Student Essay #4:**  
**Freedom and Education**  
by T.S.

You will not appreciate what I am going to say about our Chuuk Campus. Some of us here are here for wrong reasons. Sure, we can tell you face-to-face that we want to learn, but that is a lie. We do not want to learn.

So, then, why are we here at Chuuk Campus? Many are here because they have the freedom to do what they want to do in life. They can hang out with friends on campus. They can waste their time. They can use Internet to go onto Facebook and chat with friends everywhere. They can also look for eligible husbands or wives. And, let us not forget — they can wait for their refund.

So, when teachers tell students to study hard, it is the students' freedom to choose — to study hard or to waste time. Well, as far as many students are concerned, to study hard is not an option of choice. When teachers tell them to study hard, they hear but they do not listen. They promise teachers to try their best, but to try their best is the least important choice. In effect, to study hard is like the freedom to choose to be in prison.

Then, why do they come at all? There are two reasons. First, their parents want their children to be educated, but we the children want a spouse, not an education. Also, we escape from home to escape from home responsibilities. We say that we want our college degree — that is not true. What we really want is a boyfriend or girlfriend.

We are experts at telling lies to our teachers. *"I'm sorry, please give me a second chance,"* they say. Later, it will be a third chance, a fourth chance, and more. I tell you, we are really good at lying to our teachers.

So, what is education all about? For one thing, it is not a plan or hope for a better life in the future. Education is a place — like our Chuuk Campus — to spend time with friends, to waste our time. No one of us will say that education is worthless. Then, what will we say? We will say that education is worthwhile. Friendship and marriage are our goals in life. Success is therefore not wanting to learn, not getting a college degree. Success is having fun, enjoying our lives now. Forget the future! φ

**Student Essay #5:**  
**Waiting for My Refund**  
by G.L.

Do you know what makes me so happy on campus? There is only one reason, and it is not meeting friends or spending my time on Facebook. My greatest happiness on campus is the thought that I will receive my refund check.

I cannot stop thinking about my refund. Then, when I receive the check, I am so happy. I go to the business office to ask for the release of my refund check. I often lie to the business office workers — I tell them that I have family problems, that I need the money to help my poor parents, that we are sometimes hungry because we do not have enough money to buy food.

Once I receive my refund check, I skip classes. When I spend all my refund money, then I go back to campus.

Now, my dear teacher, do not feel sorry for me or for my future. Do not waste your time trying to advise me to change the way I think and feel. As you told us before, *"You have the right to be stupid."* Well, I take that right and I use that right — I choose not to study, I choose not to learn, I choose to be stupid. I just do not want to learn. φ

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**Student Essay #6:**  
**Pachification**  
by J.H.

You asked us to be honest in writing an essay on obstacles to student learning. So, let me give you only one honest reason. In Chuuk it is called pachification.

Many of us do not want to learn because a college education does not help a lot. Many people find jobs, not because of their qualifications, but because pachification can get jobs for us. All we have to do is to know certain leaders in government or business, and, if we are related to them, we can easily get jobs.

We do not need to be educated, and so many of us college students can find jobs without getting a degree. All we need is family and relatives. Families feed us and take care of us. Relatives hire us, unqualified, just because we are related. That is the way we do things in Chuuk, and Chuuk Campus is not necessary. φ

**Student Essay #7:  
What Do I Hate About College?**

by M.L.

I hate many things about Chuuk Campus, and so I must begin by apologizing to you for writing this stupid essay. Also, when I say that I have good reasons for hating college, I know that you will say that the reasons are bad, not good. Maybe we just think differently.

Like many other students, I am lazy, but let me tell you why I am lazy. I hate assignments. I feel like crying when you give us assignments. I get into a bad mood. I just think, “F— school!”

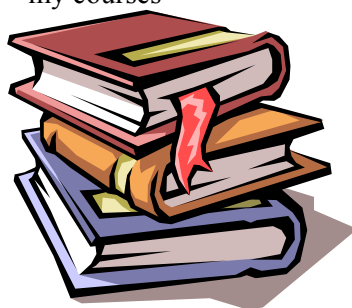
I hate to read books, hand-outs, novels, short stories. I hate to write essays or journals. I hate math and the other subjects. I hate quizzes and tests. I also hate Fs, because I just want to pass

my courses

my courses without studying, and I just want to get out of college, but my parents will get angry at me if I get Fs and drop out. So, I stay here, unwilling to learn.

I watched a movie called “Gone With the Wind”. It was about a selfish and proud woman named Scarlet O’Hara. When she got into a problem, she always said, “*I won’t worry about it today. There’s always tomorrow.*” In so many ways, I am like Scarlet — never facing problems today, always pushing away solutions until another day which will never come.

I know that I will regret my own thoughts, feelings, and action, but I still have tomorrow to worry about what I regret today. So, I do not care about hating college at this time. I will figure it all out — some day — in my own dark future. φ



**Student Essay #8: Studying Gives Me Headaches**

by J.U.

Do you know what my biggest obstacle to learning is? Studying! That is, studying is my biggest obstacle to learning. That is why I do not want to learn — studying gives me headaches. Every time when I study, I get a headache. Some students are lucky — they study and do not get headaches. As for me, I am unlucky — I study and get headaches. So, I am sick and tired of studying and learning.

I used to study in elementary and secondary schools. That was when I was just a boy. Now, I am a man, and I am smart enough to know what a man has to know. I do not need to have teachers who advise me to study and learn.

Also, as a young man, I am free to think the way that I think. For instance, I do not want to think about my own future as well as the future of Chuuk. I do not want to think about what job I will have in the future. Thinking is like studying — it gives me headaches.

Here is another example: global warming and island-sinking. Just thinking about how my small island will sink in the future gives me headaches. I do not want to think about this.

I do not have time to think and worry. I just want to be happy now, and that is why I like to spend my time with friends. They make me happy. Alcohol and drugs make me happy. Studying and thinking do not make me happy at all.

So, please, my beloved teacher, do not advise me to study hard. That kind of advice only gives me headaches. Do not ask me to think and study. Just help me to pass all of my courses. I am not afraid of Cs. Just do not give me any Fs. φ

**Student Essay #9:**  
**There's Something About Teachers**  
by N.B.

I remember something that you told us in late January. You gave us an assignment to write an essay about foreigners in Micronesia. You said that, among 29 students, only 10 submitted their essays. You scolded us and asked why most did not submit their essays.

I went home and did some math. If only 10 submitted, then 19 did not. So, 19 out of 29 is the same as 66% did not. I was part of the 66% because, I remember, I did not submit my essay. So, I had to question myself, "*Why not?*" Here is my answer.

First, I came to Chuuk Campus to learn, not to think. However, you always tell us to think, think, think. To me, thinking is not the same as learning, but I know that you believe that thinking and learning are the same. I do not want to think, and so I do not want to learn. I want to share with you what thinking means on campus. It means spending your time with friends outside of class and thinking about what makes us happy and how to have fun together. It also means looking around for a future spouse and knowing how to choose the right one for yourself.

Second, outside of class, students sometimes discuss their instructors. Some are boring, others are mean and strict. A few are too hard to understand. Their English-speaking and their lessons are not at all easy to understand. So, we sit in the classroom and learn nothing. We cannot even take notes when we do not understand what the teacher's lecture is all about. After a while, we realize that we are wasting our time in class, and so we decide to be late to class or not to attend at all. Why waste our time in class to learn nothing?

Third, a few times you said that, if we do not want to learn at college, we should drop out and go home to help the family. I want to explain why many of us do not want to drop out of college. We want to get away from home just to be with friends. Our parents think that we are in college, studying hard to graduate. We are here, not to study hard, but to find the right one. You know what I mean.

Fourth, teachers, like our parents, do not really know and understand us the students. Teach-

Teachers, like our parents, scold us, and we know and understand how you think and feel. However, knowing and understanding will not help us to change. As you have told us before, some people do a lot of talking — without doing the walking. If you really want to help us, then teach us how to walk the walk. φ

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**Student Essay #10:**  
**Why Are You Wasting Our Time?**  
by Anonymous

I want to describe my peers, and you are going to hate me for saying what I say.

First, last year our campus sponsored a mini-summit to discuss the COM-FSM mission, vision, values, and goals. I am sure that it was important to tell us this information, but the mini-summit did not help me to understand my own mission, vision, values, and goal in life.

Second, you told us that, at our All-Campus Meetings, at most 25% of all students attend. So, where are the 75%? In their own minds, they have better things to do than to sit around and listen to nonsense. I am one of the 25%, and much of what you faculty, staff, and administrators say is truly nonsense.

But I want you to understand why it is nonsense not only to me but also to many other students. Too many of us students do not have a mission in life — no personal vision of the future, and no personal goal in life.

Third, to help us, the Student Services Department sponsored the study skills workshop — learn how to study better. Part of that workshop was to teach us how to develop our own academic goals. So, at the first workshop, student attendance was zero. At the second workshop, attendance was also zero. At the third workshop, there were about 15-20 of us. Is that all? Why so few? Because we do not consider time management to be an important goal in life. So, why waste our time attending a workshop that cannot help us to set up our own personal mission, vision, or goal in life?

Why are you wasting our time? Each of us students needs to learn how to identify his or her own mission in life, to envision that future in life, and then to set up his or her own goal in life. Continue to do what you do, and 25% of us will benefit — but not the remaining 75%. φ

## A Response by Campus Dean Kind Kanto

I remember a poster that I saw with this statement on it: *"What you become is what you settled for."* This is my response to the students who expressed some honest reasons why they do not do well at COM-FSM Chuuk Campus. They are students for all the wrong reasons. They claim that they are not doing well at school because they are homesick, lazy, prideful, nervous or shy, or they do not care, just waiting to get refunds, to use Facebook, to look for a spouse and so forth.

I remember when I first left home for high school. I was very homesick. I had my choices then either to surrender to my homesickness, or attend school. I struggled with this mixed feeling. It was difficult. Going to college was even harder. I had to go abroad because there was no college here. You guys are attending college on Weno, Chuuk. You are with mostly Chuukese, living with relatives, people from your islands, and eating your favorite local food. The sign below says it all. *"Lifetime of Quality Learning at Home."* At HOME!

What else can anybody ask for? You have it made here at home. Why are you homesick? Imagine those who had to go far away because they did not have the opportunity now available to you. Are you really homesick or is that simply an excuse?

Several claim that they are lazy. We have a Chuukese saying, *"Penipen e itino, e mwengepii. Nopwut e angoranan, e mwenge."* This literally means that the sea cucumber lies in the sand and eats sand. The moray eel hunts for food, and it will have food. What you become is what you settle for. What you eat is what you settle for. If you want to be dependent on others, go right ahead — be lazy. Then, what you will have will always be what others spare to give you, not what you really want. Is that the kind of life you want? Or do you want to be like the moray eel, hunting for and getting what it wants? Remember, what you become is what you settle for.



Others claim that they want to get their refunds. Refund is money. Another saying says, *"If you want to give someone fish, teach him how to fish."* You get refund only one time each semester. You may get your refund this semester but if your grades are bad, you will not get refund again. Maybe you will flunk out of school and that is the end of refund for you. However, if you have good grades, finish school and earn a degree, you will find employment and have money the rest of your life. You will get paid every two weeks. An edu-

(continued on page 7)

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## Another Response: Advice from a Man Who Made \$2,000 a Minute

by SS Coordinator Maika Tuala

King Solomon of the Old Testament was well-known for his wisdom. God asked him to identify what he desired most of all. Solomon did not seek money, power, or respect. He selected wisdom (or knowledge put to use). God granted him such wisdom.

Moreover, Solomon used his wisdom to enable himself to earn 666 gold talents a year (or \$1.033 billion a year). That amounted to \$2,000 a minute. To a Chuuk Campus student, it would equal two refund checks a minute! Maybe each of our students should ask King Solomon for advice!

Solomon's advice is already available — in Proverbs 29:18: *"Where there is no vision, the people perish."* Businesses, colleges, and even governments have taken this advice seriously. Each organization has its own institutional vision, or mission statement. Yes, even COM-FSM has a vision or mission statement.

Now, let's return to Solomon's advice — learn the definition of "perish". It means "to suffer complete ruin or destruction", or, more simply put, "to die."

(continued on page 7)



**A Response** by Campus Dean Kind Kanto  
(continued from page 6)

cation with a degree means money all your life. Which do you prefer, money once or money forever?

There are still others who claim that they want to find a spouse Chuuk Campus. Okay, find a spouse, and then what? What will you and your spouse live on? At least in the U.S., they have welfare and food stamp programs to depend on. What about you here in Chuuk? You will only get what your relatives may afford to spare you. What happen when you have children? Like you, they will get only what your relatives could spare to give them. Remember, what you become is what you settle for. What a shame, you will always be at the mercy of your relatives.

There is no need for education because you will only use “pachification”. Well, good for you if you have somebody who would take you on for pachification. However, remember this, you will be like a cow with a ring in your nose attached to a rope. Wherever your relative pulls you toward, you will go. Whether you like it or not, you have no choice.

Some students claim they came to COM-FSM Chuuk Campus to be freed from the chores at home. You may think that you are fooling your parents by pretending to come to school. You are only fooling yourselves because soon your classmates will be graduating but you will not. Soon, they will be employed, but you will not. Soon, you will try to hang out with your friends but they will be busy with their new friends from work, discussing their work, which you will not understand nor find interest in. What you are presently escaping from will catch up with you. Should you want to escape from the boring home chores, get an education and join the rest who are out there in their offices, meeting new people and discovering new things everyday. If you do not have an education, you will be stuck at home all your life, doing those things you are running away from now.

So what is it here at COM-FSM Chuuk Campus for you and those like you, the lazy, the facebook, the refund, the escape from home chores, the don’t care, and the finding a

spouse? COM-FSM is not for you. You shall leave as soon as possible, or else you are going to owe the college money for courses you fail. Leave before you entice the dedicated students with your drugs and alcohol. Leave COM before you cause other students to behave like you.

COM-FSM Chuuk Campus is a place for “Lifetime of Quality Learning at Home.” It is where you learn Computer Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and other programs, not Facebook. It is where you learn Math, Science, English, Education, History, Accounting, and the like. It is where you learn to look for the answers to questions using the internet, not looking for friends on social network. This is where you learn the methods of teaching so when you become a teacher, you will be a damn good one. It is a place where you transform into a responsible person. ☐

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**Another Response** by SSC Maika Tuala  
(continued from page 6)

So, let us re-read Solomon’s advice: “Without a vision, you have a dark future.” As I read the 10 student essays in this special edition of Meseiset, I sadly conclude: Our Chuuk Campus students — many of them — have no bright future. You may think or feel — falsely — that you have a vision in life, that you are wise enough to have a bright future. You are only fooling yourself.

Choose wisely. Take Solomon’s advice, or listen to your peers and walk into your own dark future. It is your choice. However, just be warned that you must accept the consequences of your choice. Choose right, and the consequences will be positive. Choose wrong, and the consequences will be negative. The choice you make as a COM-FSM student WILL affect you for the rest of your life — each one of you. Run away from your home responsibilities, run away from parents and teachers, but you can never run away from the consequences of your choice.

If you choose to be lazy — if you make up ridiculous excuses for not studying — if you do not want to learn — you WILL have a sad and useless life. Your faculty and staff are here to help you to make the right choices in life. Do not throw away this opportunity. The choice is yours. ☐

**Photo Album: CHUUK CAMPUS FOUNDING DAY, April 1, 2013**  
 Anderson Field, Weno, Chuuk (*Photo Credits: Edson Asito and Akius Herman*)



**Getting ready  
for team sports**



**Staying shady in  
the sizzling sun**



**Running away from the girls**



**Running in the relay**



**Pull! Pull! Pull!**



**V  
stands for  
VICTORY!**



**Standing  
at the top  
of the world**



**Photo Album: CHUUK CAMPUS CULTURAL DAY, April 2, 2013**  
 Anderson Field, Weno, Chuuk (Photo Credits: Edson Asito and Akius Herman)



*It's showtime!*



*Oops! says Maika.*



*Come on, Ben. Do it right!*



*Hail, King and Queen 2013!*



*The Northwesterners got it right!*



*Traditionalists  
and  
Modernaires*



*Thanks, SDA*



*Thanks, CHS*



## A FINAL EDITORIAL by SS 150 Instructor Alton Higashi

Many Chuuk Campus students are experts at giving excuses. There is little truth in what they say, especially when they ask an instructor to give them **“a second chance”**. Well, let me, as an instructor, explain how I think and feel about giving students **“a second chance”**.

First, in each semester, there is a time when an instructor submits an **“early warning deficiency report”** on students’ progress in the classroom. This report lists those students who are struggling academically or do not care enough to study. Strike One!

Then, about 3-4 weeks later, each instructor submits the **“mid-term evaluation report”** on students who seem to be failing (i.e., likely to receive letter grades of D/F). Strike Two!

Given both reports, the instructor tries his or her best to encourage students to study hard. Many students then ask the instructor to forgive them, to give them a second chance. Some of us instructors are generous to a fault, and so we do give **“second chances”** to students.

Third, about 2 weeks later, the semester schedule includes **“the last day to withdraw with W”**. At this time, some students do withdraw, but most ask for a third chance, a fourth chance, a fifth chance, and so on.

I have learned – from my teaching experience – that students take advantage of these **“chances”**. They want a **“second chance”** **NOT** to improve their studies. Rather, they

want a second chance to **CONTINUE FOOLING AROUND**. They just want to continue hanging around the campus to waste time, or just to wait for their refunds. Then, with the refunds, some actually disappear from campus – they fly off to Guam, never completing their semester. They just want the refund money – that is all.

Strike Three! The game ends.

To me, **“a second chance”** is a lie which many students use for all the wrong reasons. I have little trust in these students who ask for a second chance. They expect me to believe in their lies, and I cannot do so.

What, then, can I do? For one thing, as an instructor, I will not give **“a second chance”** to students. If you do not want to learn – if you do not care about your own education – then you should withdraw, drop out, or get kicked out.

Or, as an instructor, I will give advice to my students to study hard. However, I will not have to teach you to study hard. As young men and women, you already know your responsibility to study hard – to work hard at home, to work hard in your communities. If you do not do so, then you should withdraw, drop out, or get kicked out.

As Campus Dean Kind Kanto says, you can transform yourself into responsible human beings. As SS Coordinator Maika Tuala says, the choice is yours. φ