Right-wingers urge deflation

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the "Life" Speech Movement at the Berkeley "multiversity" in 1964, opposition which has faded considerably in the wake of economic contraction.

(1) The attempt to make good grades harder to get is a late endeavor to paper over the still-persisting lack of genuine educational substance in "higher education," which was exposed during the 1960's, to create the illusion of rigor, integrity, and intellectual discipline and thereby re-establish credibility for what remains an essentially unimaginative system of vocational training. The 1960's professors tended to give in to the student demands of intellectual alienation.

(2) The attempt to make good employment more uncertain is an effort to accommodate people to the-grade-granting function as a last-ditch attempt to preserve whatever the particulars of policy, perhaps violent fear of humiliation, to translate social failings into personal failings. If you can't get a job or realize your own dreams it is not the fault of a crumbling, irresponsible egalitarian economic system but rather of your own lack of talent or effort.

(3) The attempt to deflect grades in an effort to accommodate people to things as they are and thus to minimize the potential threat to social order represented by those who expect, and demand, more than they are getting. The recent spate of college reports on grade deflation, then, like the one issued last week here at MIT, a reflection of whatever the particulars of policy, constitutes a defensive assault launched by those who "have" against those who "have not," in a last-ditch attempt to preserve their own sense of entitlement. As such, the reports are reminiscent of the posture assumed by another social moribund, Henry S. Prichett (as in the Prichett lounge), MIT President, founder of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and director of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, when he condescended to the presence at the elite Twentieth Century Club in 1901, a speech on the importance of educational tracking — that perhaps "the room at the top"

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