

Money \$marts: It's time for DOLE U to be shut down, if it actually exists

By Citizen Contributor, GERRY KRAMER

A confidential information source tells me that somewhere in America exists a secret educational institution dedicated to perfecting the art of making more people dependent on government. It's called the College for Dependence Optimization and Leveraging Entitlements (aka DOLE U). Aspiring politicians and bureaucrats supposedly attend to gain knowledge and ultimately certification as qualified to "hold elected office" or be "appointed to positions in government agencies that hand out money."

DOLE U may very well be fictitious, but how else to explain the relentless expansion of government programs and the spending of trillions of dollars with little or no effect on the problems these actions are supposed to solve. New elections don't seem to halt the flood of wasted money. Nothing ever gets closed down or denied funding when budgets are submitted. Duplicate programs just keep proliferating.

I'll bet that DOLE U does exist and judging by what its graduates have wrought, it's a spectacular success. My source explained how DOLE U is structured with core course requirements and electives aimed at solving specific societal problems using other people's money with little or no accountability for success. The issue of poverty is an example cited by my source as a major decades long success owed to the excellent instructional curriculum at DOLE U.

According to the Cato Institute, a nonprofit private think tank, there are currently 122 different means tested federal government operated anti-poverty programs across all agencies and departments. These include big programs like Medicaid as well as small ones like aid to Indian Tribal Organizations. In 2002, the no longer existing Congressional Research Service put that number at 85. Assuming comparability, that's a 50 percent increase in anti-poverty programs.

One might assume the increase to be the result of more poverty. But census and income data indicate a roughly constant 15 percent of the population in poverty for the last 50 years. Yes, the population has grown, but why did we need new programs when just increasing the funding of existing programs would have done the job. The short answer is that without coordinated oversight, government departments are able to create new programs without regard or even knowledge of existing ones elsewhere. That's practicing the lessons of DOLE U required

core courses Federal Program Proliferation 101 and Extending Program Longevity 102.

One of the most popular elective courses at DOLE U is offered by the Poverty Programs Department: Increasing Program Budgets Despite Failure to Achieve Objectives. That probably explains why the aggregate spending of all federal anti-poverty programs is some \$600 billion or approximately \$15,000 for every man, woman and child in the country classified in poverty. Since the poverty income level is around \$11,000, the poor would be better off simply receiving a check to lift their income while taxpayers would be better off if the government eliminated most of the programs.

Moreover, despite the trillions spent on anti-poverty programs since the 1960's, poverty seems to persist. Perhaps it's time to try something with a different approach. A start would be to shut down DOLE U — if it actually exists.

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