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Sec. 2

Ob-Gyn

Many psychologists have conducted research on the determinants of happiness, studying such factors as money, health, sex, community, love, marriage and work. It has been found that job satisfaction was the factor most consistently related to happiness. Anyone who has been unemployed for any length of time is aware of the feelings of despair that can occur. Work can be an arena in which we are given the opportunity to demonstrate our talents, our knowledge, our creativity. People perform their jobs for a variety of reasons, many of them pragmatic, but what finally elevates a tedious or even harmful daily routine to an enriching way of life is the degree to which we are allowed to express our natural talents. Productivity, therefore, should not be inexorably linked with the process of making profits at any cost, but rather with the very human need to be useful and worthwhile, and joined to this is the also very human need to be appreciated and recognized as such. The ideal relationship between employer and employee might be one of symbiosis: mutual productivity and mutual recognition. And the work can range from mopping a floor to directing the course of an entire department.

Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs supports this; he claims that psychological health, in fact, depends upon how high up the ladder of needs one climbs. Once the basic physiological, safety and love needs are met, it becomes necessary to reach for those satisfactions that come from what Maslow terms "metaneeds" - achievement, self-esteem, dignity, and finally meaning and self-actualization. He believed that, among other things, the pursuit of these metaneeds often produces, as a side effect, positive consequences for society as a whole.

Given all of this, reading the Ritchie Report by Donald Gutstein reveals some very unpleasant threats to ~~among other things~~ our sources of job satisfaction, our psychological health, and both our and the University's productivity. It is difficult to understand how the Administration could have been so stupidly short-sighted as to believe that an efficiency study of the sort that Ritchie and Associates have been conducting will ultimately repair whatever low productivity and high expenditure levels exist. By breaking down our jobs into automaton-like tasks, by standing over us and observing us, by making judgements upon us without any intrinsic knowledge of our jobs, by making us fill in absurdly irrelevant reports every day, by disregarding our own hard-won expertise in our own jobs, and then ultimately by taking away our ability to determine the flow of our own jobs ourselves, they are destroying us. Children are treated like that, but eventually are allowed to grow up. The University administration is forcing us into a state of suspended infancy, forcing us to regress in the name of efficiency, as if employees who are patronized, disillusioned, depressed, angry, hurt and profoundly dissatisfied could be more efficient, even if they so wanted.

Clerical workers know that often the only sure source of job satisfaction is their right to make their own stamp on their job, be it by designing and prioritizing their own tasks, or by participating in larger decision-making. Intelligent supervisors

give only the most cursory direction, knowing that worker autonomy is far more "efficient" in the long run.

Has the work of Ritchie and Associates heralded a return to a kind of dehumanized serfdom for University workers? Is the University merely playing at intelligent academia, while revealing their truly appalling ignorance, not just of human nature in general, but the precedence set by more enlightened societies which actually solicit the ideas of workers in order to achieve greater efficiency, productivity and satisfaction for all?

Sadly, and maddeningly, it appears so.