

The economic impact of the Christmas season

The famous phrase “Black Friday” is a polarizing term that is often associated with too-good-to-be-true deals on unnecessarily large televisions and viral internet videos of stampedes of eager shoppers. However, the term generally refers to the Friday after Thanksgiving when many businesses, especially retail stores, begin to sell mass amounts of inventory and become profitable after months of losses. (In accounting terminology, “black” means profitable as opposed to “red” when a business is in the negative). While we here at Cathedral Prep stay true to the meaning of this religious season, many economists and secularists alike claim that Christmas has become more a celebration of American capitalism than of the birth of Christ. But how big of an impact does the Christmas season really have on the United States economy?

Of the Americans who chose to spend their holiday weekend following Thanksgiving shopping, one thing is clear: they were ready to spend some money. The National Retail Federation (NRF) estimates that over the holiday weekend, the average shopper spent \$251 on gifts. Last year, holiday retail sales reached over \$655 billion, which only strengthened the general trend of growing annual holiday sales in the United States. While we remember and focus the miracle of Christ’s birth on the 25th each year, the consistent strength of the American economy is just one more of the many Christmas blessings.

Another often overlooked benefit of the holiday season is the impact it has on an important concept in economic models: consumer sentiment or outlook. Often times the actual strength of an economy is less important than how individual people feel the economy is doing. If the U.S. is in a deep recession but the American people feel all is well, it is likely that they will continue to spend money and inadvertently lift the

economy out of that recession. Jingle bells and holiday cookies tend to give everyone a little extra cheer, and the economy benefits as a result. Richard Curtin, an economist from the University of Michigan, discusses the importance of consumer sentiment in a recent data release, and also discusses the real effects of a strong economy in the Christmas season saying, "...the most important changes in early December were higher income expectations..." It seems as though this holiday season is only helping to reinforce the bull market the American economy finds itself in now.

As the origin of the term Black Friday implies, the holiday season can be important to individual businesses and even make sure they turn a yearly profit. The short period between Thanksgiving and Christmas accounts for, on average, 30 percent of all sales for retailers according to NRF. In less than a month, many big stores, such as Best Buy and Target, as well as little stores bring in almost a third of all their annual revenue. Research also points out the shifting ways in which consumers choose to purchase their Christmas gifts, with more consumers choosing to exclusively purchase goods online than exclusively in brick and mortar stores in 2017. This Christmas season is only pushing what has long been foretold by experts that the internet and technology in general would dramatically shift the nature of the economy.

Whether one is Christian or not, it is hard to ignore the economic presence the Christmas season or more broadly, the holiday season, has on the American economy. As consumers begin to drastically increase their spending attempting to express their love for their family and friends, many businesses give thanks for another year of profitability. While we may be grateful for the salvation promised with the birth of Christ, we can also be thankful for a bit of economic prosperity.

Addressing the issue of America's aging infrastructure

Over the past few years, the issue of America's aging infrastructure has floated in and out of the national conversation. However, experts are becoming increasingly concerned over the condition and degradation of America's roads, bridges, and water infrastructure which includes sewers, storm drains, and canals. In fact, in their 2017 "Infrastructure Report Card", the American Society of Civil Engineers gave the United States' infrastructure a D+ grade. In 2013, Transportation for America rated Pennsylvania the state with the poorest infrastructure, citing that one in four bridges is considered "structurally deficient" with roughly 19 million people driving over these bridges each day. America undoubtedly has an infrastructure problem which poses a growing safety risk each day it goes unaddressed.

What would a movement to fix America's countrywide problem look like and why has nothing been done up until this point? Any revamping of the nation's infrastructure would inevitably start with the federal government, but details have been scarcely discussed despite some popularity in the topic in the last election cycle. However, one thing is for certain; it would be expensive. Based on estimates from the Federal Highway Administration, simply fixing substandard bridges today would cost over \$75 billion. This number also fails to consider the vast number of bridges that are expected to become deficient in the coming years, as well as the cost of every other form of infrastructure, from power lines to dams, that needs restored or replaced in the United States. At a

minimum, a complete remedy to this national crisis would cost hundreds of billions of dollars. With the federal deficit now over \$20 trillion and only growing, it is difficult to find the necessary funding to needed to repair the nation's highways and waterways.

While any bill from Congress aimed at fixing domestic infrastructure would be costly, some politicians are optimistic on passing such legislation. Lawmakers on both sides of the isle believe an economic stimulus plan in the form of infrastructure improvement would help spur the economy with the dramatic increase in federal spending. A similar approach was taken in 2009 under the Obama administration in response to the recession with mixed results, although the economic conditions were much different than current ones. In addition to this, people like Jim Glassman, an economist for J.P. Morgan, believe that improved roads and other forms of transportation will facilitate trade across the country. By designing and creating more efficient roads, transportation costs for many companies would fall. While you might never drive on a new bridge in California, that new tablet you ordered on Amazon might be a bit cheaper because of it.

While a dramatic increase in government spending has the potential to stimulate the economy, a mistimed bill may produce undesired effects. The last true stimulus bill seen in the United States was in 2009 to curb the deep recession. However, financial markets and the American economy in general has been performing quite well. The implementation of a stimulus plan under current economic conditions may inadvertently overheat the economy and deepen the looming recession.

Although failing to address America's obvious infrastructure issue is a real gamble, lawmakers have been focused on other matters in recent months. As many Americans are happy with the current state of the economy, pressure to keep up high economic growth may incentivize Congress to seek new ways to

sustain growth, like using government resources to revitalize the national highway system. However, it is important these representatives are conscientious of the long-term ramifications of a hasty stimulus plan.

The Rambler's 2017-18 College Bowl Mania Contest

The 2017-18 college football bowl season kicks off Saturday, Dec. 16, and *The Rambler* is hosting its fifth annual bowl mania contest. The contest is open to current Cathedral Prep students, faculty, staff, and administration. Entry is free and limited to one entry per person. All submissions are due by Saturday, Dec. 16, at noon Eastern time.

To enter, fill out the form below (or use [this link](#)) to select your picks for each of the bowl games. You will receive one point for each correct pick. The person to amass the most total points will earn a \$35 iTunes gift card. Additionally, second and third place will each take home \$10 iTunes gift cards.

In the event of a tie, the procedures below will be followed until the tie is broken:

1st tiebreaker: Person closest to guessing total points of College Football Playoff championship game.

2nd tiebreaker: Person to correctly select the winner of College Football Playoff championship game

3rd tiebreaker: Person to correctly select the winner of the Peach Bowl

4th tiebreaker: Person to correctly select the winner of the Fiesta Bowl.

5th tiebreaker: Person to correctly select the winner of the Rose Bowl.

6th tiebreaker: Person to correctly select the winner of the Orange Bowl.

Good luck!

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Top scorers on 2017 entrance exam earn scholarships

The following students received the top ten scores on the 2017 Cathedral Preparatory School Entrance Exam. Their results are extraordinary in a highly competitive field and we are very proud of their accomplishments.

Several eighth grade students representing over 30 different parochial, public, and private schools sat for the exam. Clearly this is no small achievement on their part.

1. Ridgeway Case, Seton Catholic School (\$2500 Tuition Scholarship)
2. Logan Nikolai, Blessed Sacrament School (\$2500 Tuition Scholarship)
3. Nicholas Fornelli, Saint Jude School (\$2500 Tuition Scholarship)
4. Andrew Kolodychak, Our Lady of Peace School (\$2500 Tuition Scholarship)
5. Connor Benson, Walnut Creek Middle School (\$2500 Tuition

Scholarship)

6. Luke Markiewicz, Saint Luke School (\$1000 Tuition Scholarship)

7. Jackson Mattocks, Seton Catholic School (\$1000 Tuition Scholarship)

8. Jake Walden, Saint Jude School (\$1000 Tuition Scholarship)

9. Michael Jenks, Walnut Creek Middle School (\$1000 Tuition Scholarship)

10. Michael Vereb, Our Lady of Peace School (\$1000 Tuition Scholarship)

Prep celebrates Halloween

The halls at Cathedral Prep seemed just a little bit spookier than normal yesterday as the Halloween Spirit took the school by storm. A student-sponsored dress down run by SGA (Student Government Association) provided those who were looking to dress up, or dress warm, an opportunity to do so while supporting one of our Prep Family members in need.



One of the most memorable parts of Halloween at Cathedral Prep happened during the middle part of second period. Giggles and laughter filled the halls as teachers handed out candy to the trick-or-treaters (students from Mother Teresa Academy).

English teacher Mr. Peightal, who was dressed as Batman, enjoyed the parade. "I enjoyed seeing the kids in their costumes with smiles on their faces."

Mother Teresa Academy is a new grade school now linked to the Prep-Villa family after the Erie Diocese closed multiple other catholic grade schools in the area.

The fun-filled day finished with the annual costume contest. Mr. Hubert, the English Department Chair, finally won this year's faculty costume contest after multiple runner up finishes as CM Punk, Jim Harbaugh and SNL character David S. Pumpkins. This year as Bret "Hitman" Hart, his pink-and-black costume featuring calf-high boots, leather jacket, and metallic visors, was enough to persuade the judges. He took home a \$20 gift card for his efforts, and most importantly, bragging rights for the next year.

Mr. Hubert was more than happy to be awarded top spot among the faculty. "I am the excellence of education! I am the best there is, the best there was, and the best there ever will be!" he proclaimed, paraphrasing Hart's famous WWE catchphrases.



Prep junior Jimmy Colvin won the student costume contest for dressing as Russell from the movie *Up*. The students were permitted to have a Halloween dress down for \$2. Several students and faculty members dressed up and wore costumes to celebrate the holiday. Students who weren't wearing costumes were showing their Halloween colors by wearing orange and black.



Junior Jarrett Ziacik was one of the students who wore a costume today. He wore a full body costume of a dragon. He stated, "I thought this was a pretty funny costume to wear and that it might give me a chance to win the costume contest." When asked about how he plans to celebrate the holiday tonight he said he just plans on handing out candy to kids in his neighborhood. You could really feel the energy of Halloween in the school today.

Mr. Nick Belluomini, who worked in the Cathedral Prep maintenance department was diagnosed with bile duct cancer. The Cathedral Prep family has rallied behind Belluomini, one of the most passionate Prep employees, during this difficult time. A nine hour surgery that removed 90% of his liver and his bile duct early in the school year has been the first big step in his recovery. With multiple other surgeries and chemotherapy looming, all the money raised is going straight to him and his family to try to ease his financial burden during this time. We ask that you please keep him and his family in your prayers.



The foreign exchange students enrolled at Prep got in on the Halloween action by carving pumpkins for the first time. Miss Lion's ESL and Creative Writing classes helped our brothers from across the globe learn some American Traditions.

"It was a great bonding and cultural experience that truly expressed the brotherhood here at this school," said Miss Lion.

“It was so much fun, this is something I’ve never done before, and I’m glad I did,” said Feifan Ye.

After the pumpkins were carved, they were then displayed outside the 9th street entrance of the school.

Why does college have to break the bank?

Perhaps one of the scariest and most important decisions anyone has to make in their lifetime is what to do with themselves after high school. For many young adults, especially here at Prep, attending college is the assumed answer, but this begs a much more complex question: which



one? The U.S. Department of Education formally lists over 3,000 four-year institutions high school seniors have to choose from, making their decision, at a minimum, overwhelming. On top of this, the cost of attending these schools seems hardly affordable, as many schools have over \$40,000 annual price tags, while the average American household brings in just under \$60,000 per year. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the cost of a four-year diploma has risen by 376 percent since 1984. But why has receiving just an undergraduate degree become so expensive over the last 32 years?

While there are certainly a number of factors that have led

such high costs for a diploma, one of the biggest has been the focus on campus amenities. A paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) suggests that schools are devoting larger and larger amounts of money into non-academic projects, such as recreation centers, sports teams, and other luxuries. Did your first choice school just put in a \$100 million basketball court? You are most likely directly paying for it. This trend is especially present in schools less focused on their academic reputation and more on showing off the beauty or aesthetic attraction of their campus. Schools are tending to brag more about the size of their football stadium than their graduate job placement percent, and the home pages of college websites show Olympic-sized swimming pools while photos of classrooms are several clicks away. This sudden focus on non-academic spending is likely a consequence of a shift in how students view attending college. Instead of strictly being a means to obtaining a better career, attending a university is seen as a four-year, overnight country club or five-star resort and spa. More research by NBER only confirms this loss of focus on academic performance, as dropout rates are only going up. Students are increasingly choosing schools based on football rankings and recreational basketball rather than job opportunities, and as a result, colleges will only charge more and more to improve their teams and gymnasiums.



Another major contributor to the dramatic rise in tuition is government issued student loans. While providing lower interest rates to give more students opportunities to receive a higher education, it has brought with it huge downside. A

separate study conducted by NBER points to the increase in the number of loans issued to students as well as a raising of limits on how much can be borrowed. As the government continuously gives more and more money away, universities

realize students are willing to use all of the money they received towards college, so it is only rational for colleges to keep raising tuition costs. Because of this, the Pew Research Center now estimates student loan debt to be over \$1.3 trillion. This crisis is only becoming worse, but as voter demographics from the United States Elections Project shows, college age voter turnout is significantly lower than any other age group, giving congressional representatives little reason to address the issue. There appears to be no obvious solution to this enormous issue. Although some have called for massive debt forgiveness from the federal government, this would likely have economic ramifications much worse than the current crisis.

As college becomes more and more expensive, many high school students are justifiably discouraged about their future opportunities. While college can be quite costly, a diploma from a university is becoming increasingly necessary to ensure economic stability, and it appears that the benefits of having the right degree still outweigh the extreme costs of tuition. However, students must continue to make important choices about where to attend or if they should even attend college at all, a decision that will have an immense influence on the rest of their lives.

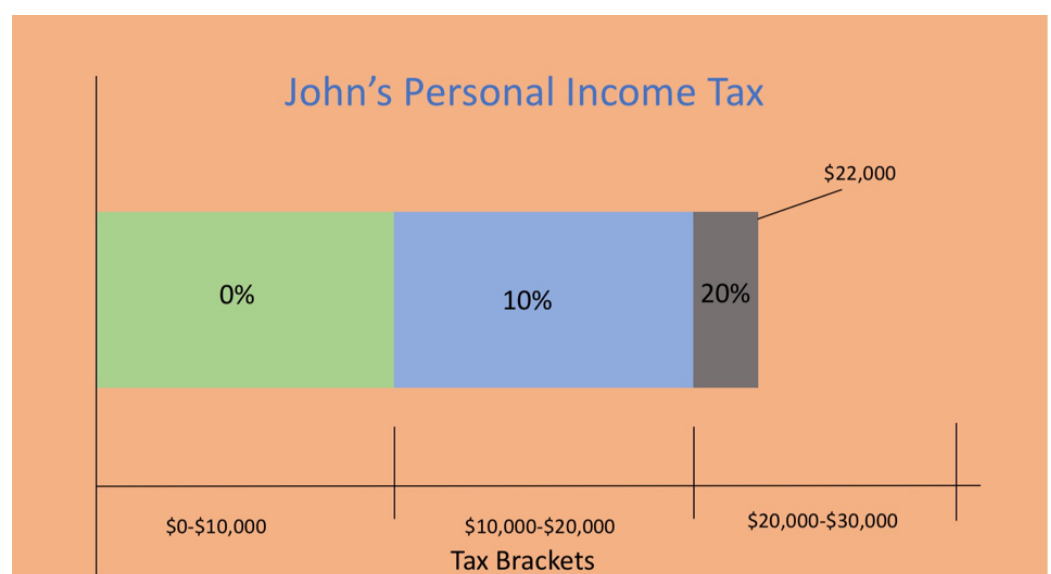
This article was created by the Cathedral Prep Economics Club. Our mission is to create school awareness and spark interest in real world economic principles by breaking down relevant events within the economy. We are always open to committed and interested new members. If this sounds appealing to you, please contact Mr. Pituch for more information.

What's the deal with tax reform?

With both the House and Senate returning from their summer recess just two weeks ago, their top priority already appears to be tax reform. Following a failed attempt at passing legislation that would modify the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, the Republican controlled Congress has quite the incentive to deliver on one of their top platform promise, as their credibility is on the line while voters begin to question their competency as the 2018 midterm approaches.

A poll out of the Pew Research Center shows that 72% of Americans are bothered by the complexity of the tax code while 80% do not believe corporations pay their fair share of taxes. Since the beginning of the most recent election cycle, President Trump, as well as the Republican Party as a whole, has been promising a simplification of the tax code that would include both cuts for the middle class as well as a lowering of the corporate income tax while simultaneously eliminating loopholes. But what would such a bill look like?

The U.S. tax code currently sits at over 74,000 pages, and it is no wonder firms such as H&R Block thrive by



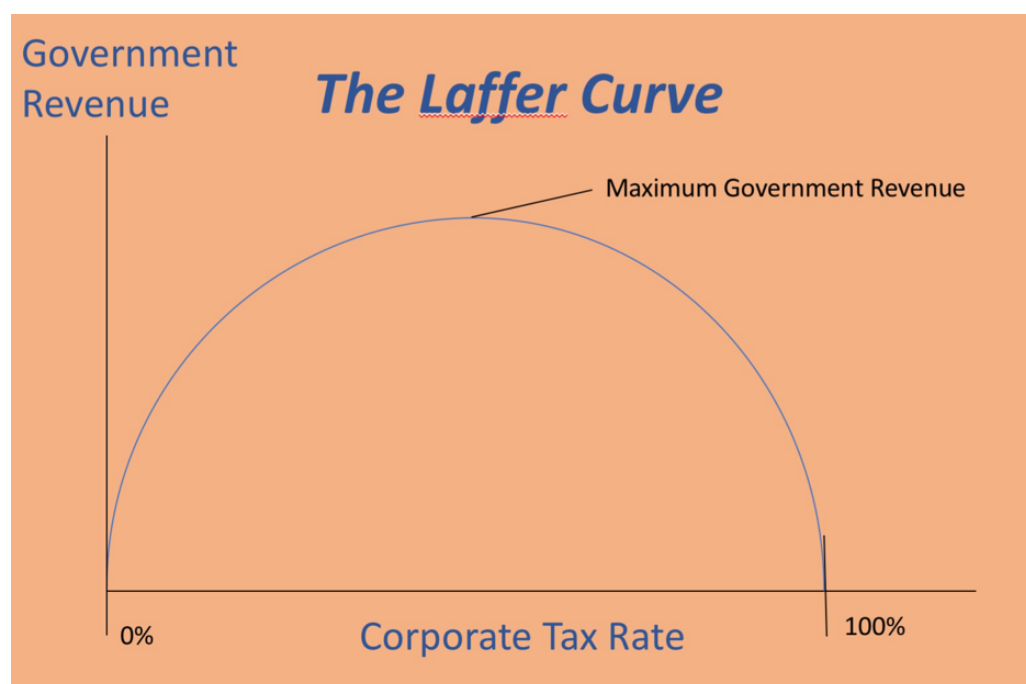
by navigating it. Individual tax rates are presently split up into seven distinct tax brackets, but under Trump's vague proposal, this number would shrink to three, including

brackets at 10%, 25%, and 35%. However, these brackets can be deceiving. To understand how brackets work, let's imagine a man named John who makes \$22,000 a year, who lives in a country with three tax brackets: 0% for the first \$10,000, 10% for those making up to \$20,000, and 20% for those making over \$20,000. While John is making more than \$20,000, he does not pay a fifth of his income to the government. Instead, the first \$10,000 is taxed at the lowest bracket's rate of 0%, the next \$10,000 at 10%, and only \$2,000 of John's income is taxed at 20%. This puts his effective tax rate well under 20%, despite being in the top income tax bracket. While these brackets are a bit exaggerated in comparison to the actual tax brackets, John's theoretical income tax is important in understanding the concept of a graduated or progressive income tax.

However, income taxes are much more complex than this as the government allows what are referred to as deductions. Deductions essentially give portions of your income immunity from tax for various reasons, such as having student loans or mortgage payments. The conservative-backed simplification would most likely eliminate many of these deductions making the process much simpler. One of the major criticisms of the simplification of the tax code is that it would most likely give cuts to upper income earners. Kent Smetters, who served as an economic advisor under the George W. Bush administration points out that the top 10% of people in the United States pay about 60% of the income tax, so any form of tax cut will most likely be felt by top income earners. The exact details of the proposed personal income tax regulations have yet to be released and it is likely even after they are, there will be negotiations even before an attempt to pass it takes place.

The other main aspect of the GOP tax reform is a refurbishing of the corporate income tax. Currently, the U.S. corporate income tax stands at 35%, among the highest nominal rates in the developed world. However, due to various evasion

techniques employed by large corporations, the effective corporate tax rate currently stands at around 28%, in line with similar developed nations. The verbal proposal set up by President Trump and echoed by many republicans includes a lowering of the corporate tax rate to 15% while also closing loopholes that allow companies to hide money in attempts to evade taxation. The intent is to lower the corporate tax while bringing the nominal tax rate closer to the real number. Republicans say this tax decrease would spur economic growth, but whether it will and to what extent has yet to be seen.



One of the major criticisms of decreasing the corporate tax rate is that it will only increase the U.S. national debt, which currently stands at over \$20

trillion. In order to understand the relationship between the corporate tax rate and government revenue, it is helpful to look at what is known as the Laffer Curve. When the government implements a 0% tax rate, its revenue is \$0 as there is no tax base. On the other side, when the government collects a 100% tax, there is no incentive for businesses to produce anything, and there is again no government revenue. However, there is a tax rate between these two extremes where the government will collect the largest amount of money. The question is just which side of the peak are we currently on? This remains up for debate, but dramatically decreasing government revenue will push the the United States further and further into debt.

In the coming weeks, Republicans are sure to push forward a tax reformation bill, even if it falls short of passing through Congress. While the primary goal of a GOP tax goal is sure to be economic growth, the Federal Reserve is also watching the economy, and if it fears rapid inflation, interest rates might rise faster than they already are projected to. This ultimately means a tax plan meant to encourage economic growth could have an opposite effect if it is too aggressive. In addition to this, any bill must be both relatively moderate to gain widespread support and revenue neutral; it cannot increase the national deficit in order to avoid the Senate filibuster rule. With their own reputation on the line, the Republican controlled Congress surely has a tall task of writing a realistic bill, and the specifics of such bill remain to be seen.

Class of 2017 enjoys Senior Breakfast

The Senior Breakfast at Cathedral Prep has been a tradition for quite some time now. On Wednesday, May 17, the seniors had their Senior Breakfast. This breakfast was a time of gathering together over some solid foods to socialize, as well as a brief talk from Advancement and Father Jabo.



The seniors got to eat eggs, potatoes, sausage, fruit, a muffin, and a drink. The fruit bowls were a nice assortment of summer melons as well as pineapple and grapes. The potatoes were nicely browned with some chopped onions. The food seemed to be well-regarded.

In fact, when asked what he thought of the Senior Breakfast food, senior Jaryn Simpson said, "I feel as though it was scrumptious and very well planned. It filled me up." Senior Mark Majewski also appreciated the meal and said, "It was good. Nice way to celebrate the seniors."

After everyone started finishing up their food, Father Jabo and the Advancement Office addressed the seniors. They both talked about the importance of donating as the years go on. They mentioned how we are lucky to have had such an opportunity and that the seniors should try to let future students have the same opportunities that they had.

On a sadder note, Father Jabo mentioned to the seniors that our time at Prep is now very limited. He said that the seniors should try to talk to everyone that they can now, considering they only have one week left. This message hit the seniors fairly hard, as they started looking around the room at some of their classmates that they might not know as well as they would like. All in all, however, the Senior Breakfast was a big success and was greatly appreciated by the senior class.

Feud of the Fountains update

[“Feud of the Fountains,”](#) an article written by Tim Evans in 2016, reviewed the quality of the various fountains around Cathedral Prep. This year, however, some of the fountains have changed. For example, the third floor fountain by the theology department is out of service, and the second floor fountain by the math wing had its water pressure adjusted. With such changes made, an update on the quality of the fountains is necessary.

The fourth floor only has one water fountain. Therefore, it's the best fountain on the fourth floor. However, the convenience of the fountain is about the only positive thing that it has going for it besides the half-decent water pressure. The fountain starts out very warm, but slowly transitions to a more reasonable temperature. There is a significant amount of splash up, resulting in water droplets on the pants. And if the splash up isn't bad enough, the fountain also tricks you by frequently changing water pressure and heights, causing water to splash in your face. Finally, the fountain has a very slight metallic aftertaste, leaving both an unpleasant start, and an unpleasant end.

Thirsty during theology class? Hope you're ready for a walk. The third floor theology water fountain has now been out of commission for the entire year. There are wires and various fountain parts exposed. However, many people remember this water fountain for its quality water pressure and cool waters.

The third floor fountain by the art rooms is a fair quality fountain with only a few drawbacks. The water isn't too cold or warm, the pressure isn't too high or low, and the taste isn't particularly bad or good. The only things that aren't average about this fountain are its height and cleanliness. Maybe the fact that this fountain is located by the freshman lockers explains such a short height and dirtiness. All things

aside though, this fountain only has one major shortcoming: its height.

The second floor fountain by the math department is an interesting fountain: that is if you ever get a turn. There always seems to be a line in front of this fountain due to the fact that everyone has math. It is surprising how many people wait in front of this fountain considering the fact that it's very short and the water is room temperature. However, the worst part about this fountain is the fact that it tastes slightly like sea water. Once you make this realization, you can't taste anything else every time you drink it.

The second floor water fountain near the history teachers is a fair quality fountain. The fountain is a good height and has an aesthetic metallic outlet. However, there is a little bit of calcium buildup. The side buttons are much easier to press than the front buttons, which is a little odd but not a big deal. The water is nice and cool, and the water pressure is a little low but not bad. The only really big downside about this fountain is its location next to the bathroom. In fact, you can genuinely smell the bathroom from the water fountain, which is less than ideal.

The fountain outside of Father Jabo's room is the best by far. This fountain is "blessed" with perfectly cold waters, great height, good water pressure, ideal cleanliness, and a delightful taste. Father Jabo must've picked this fountain to be by his office on purpose, because it genuinely is the ideal fountain. This fountain is also great because not many people go to it. Due to the fact that there are no classes near that area, there aren't many students passing by. This explains the cleanliness, but the other qualities are just by coincidence I guess. Fantastic fountain. 9.5/10.

Everyone has seen the high tech fountain outside of Mrs. Lopez's room and the finance office. It has a fancy water bottle fill-up station, but we weren't impressed. First off,

the water pressure in the regular fountain outlet is truly awful, especially if the fill-up station is running at the same time. You feel like you are kissing the water outlet the entire time you are drinking it. To make matters worse, the water temperature is also subpar. It's not room temperature, but it's also not cold. It's just uncomfortable. Physics teacher, Mr. Biebel is not impressed by the fountain. In fact, in an interview he said, "The one by Lopez is too high tech. I like simple. I like the fountain of disappointment on the second floor."

The first floor science wing water fountain is a great fountain. That is if you like when your pants get wet. The splash that comes off of this fountain is a huge drawback to this water fountain. There are a couple good things about this fountain though, such as the very cool and refreshing temperature of the fountain. Another thing that makes students at Cathedral Prep very happy is the water fountain is quite clean compared to others. There is very little calcium buildup, which definitely cannot be said about some of the other water fountains in the building. Although this isn't too much of a negative, it's very odd that there are no side buttons on this fountain. And lastly we discovered that unless you want water all over your face, you must press the button, then put your face to the fountain. All in all, this is a quality fountain with only a few complaints.

Onto the second floor science wing water fountain, which is almost a forgotten water fountain. This fountain is secluded and lonely for the most part. So if you are looking for a time to get away while quenching your thirst, this is the fountain to be at. This fountain is fairly clean with a decent temperature. The water pressure is great but not as great as its height. The height is not too low nor too high. There is only some splash up, which is good because a solid amount of the other ones have plenty splash up. This fountain is not too sturdy though. It is very wobbly, and if you press the right

button the water will keep flowing even if you take your hand off the button. The fountain itself is pretty loud and annoying. This isn't a social fountain, and there usually isn't a line. This is not a top fountain, but it isn't one of the worst either.

Much like the weight room itself, the water fountain down in the wrestling room is completely out of commission. The room is usually locked; therefore, it isn't open to the general public. From what we recall it was similar to the fourth floor in that it started off very warm then transitioned to very cold. It's very dirty and sweaty. If his fountain were open to the public, we still would not suggest that you use it.

This next fountain is probably one of the worst fountains that I have ever seen. The water fountain in the Prep Gym, is by far the worst water fountain in the school. First off, it even looks gross. The fountain is exposed and you can see all of the parts and rust. Then, you have to lean into the wall, which is quite weird. The button is way too hard to push and when you do push it, the warmest water is what hits you. Maybe they made it hard to push because they wanted to save you from that gross warm water. The drain barely works as you can see the water pools built up after use of it. All in all, this fountain is not a good one, and wouldn't you think you would want a good fountain to cool you down after a steamy game of handball with Coach G?

Don't want to pay for an overpriced drink in the Prep cafeteria? There is a decent water fountain right when you walk into the cafeteria. This water fountain is a little confusing. The temperature isn't too warm or too cold. The height is very good and easy to get at. Speaking of easy to get at, you can get at this fountain from any angle that you would like! This is a decent water fountain, and you shouldn't be afraid to use it.

The water fountain in the gym locker room is definitely one of

the top. This water fountain is very cold and refreshing for after gym class. This has a very unique handle and is pleasantly different than the rest of the fountains. The only negative is the fact that it does have a slight metallic aftertaste. But who cares when you just got done with a very sweaty game of Ultimate Frisbee with Coach G? This has a great height as well. Now this is what I want after a steamy gym class.

All in all, there are only a few good fountains around this school. Senior David Tullio agreed, saying, "There are two very good water fountains in this school. An exceptional water fountain with superb water pressure and Antarctica temperatures is the one on the fourth floor. Another great fountain is the second floor science wing. All around great machine. I appreciate how well they work and how spread out they are. It's comforting." The one outside Jabo's room also has to be mentioned, as it is our personal favorite.

The 2017 Ultimate Faculty Fantasy Fighting Championship Bracket

Note: All situations discussed in this article are hypothetical and created for the enjoyment of Prep students.

Final Results

With nearly 75 percent of the vote, Mr. Ng defeated Mr. Ladouceur in the finals of the 2017 Ultimate Faculty Fantasy Fighting Championship Bracket. Congratulations to Mr. Ng, who came in as a 16-seed and finished as a champion!

Semifinals Results and Finals Preview

This is it. The last two standing. On one end, you have the experienced underdog, and on the other stands the young stud. What a championship match this will be and an even better end to the school year.

Mr. Ng has defied all odds. Not only did he knock off the number one seed, Mr. Smith, he also beat defending champion Mr. Achille in yesterday's semifinal. Barely even qualifying for the tournament, Mr. Ng has quickly made his mark. He seems unstoppable at this point and is easily on fire coming into today. If Mr. Ng can somehow pull off this victory, the student body would go crazy. Never, even in the NCAA tournament, has a 16 seed even gotten to the second round. So, regardless of a heartbreaking loss or a courageous victory, I'm sure Mr. Ng will be satisfied with how far he got and perhaps even inspire future 16 seeds. Sometimes, the best competitor doesn't win, it's the one who is riding the most momentum and has the best matchup. This could be Mr. Ng's day.

On the other side, don't be fooled by J Lads' charming good looks, strong build, and youthful self. He's athletic, strong, motivated, spiritual, a little crazy, and will do anything to win. After defeating Mr. Biebel in the semifinals, Mr. Ladouceur has the potential to completely annihilate Ng and stride through the finish line. Ladouceur is another who has breezed through this tournament thus far. The difference though is that Ladouceur was supposed to be here. Meanwhile nobody thought Mr. Ng was getting past the first round. So the question remains, can Ladouceur live up to the hype, or will the pressure prove to be too much for him?

2nd Round Results and 3rd Round Preview

#16 Mr. Ng vs. #5 Mr. Achille

Here we go. Mr. Ng vs. Mr Achille in the Final Four. The 16-seed has made it this far and there is no reason to believe

Mr. Ng will he stopped. Mixed with his sheer intelligence is his drive and motivation that comes from being overlooked and under-seeded. He is carrying a large mass of voters behind him and looks primed to reach the championship. Mr. Achille on the other hand is more prepared now than ever. Entering his second consecutive Final Four, he has the most experience of any of the remaining competitors. He is a legend and simply can't be counted out. Look for Mr. Achille to come out with a sense of urgency and power his way to victory.

This will be one heck of a match which will send the winner one step closer to hauling in the beloved championship. If these two ever truly did step into a ring together, it would make for prime time entertainment. This is truly an elite field of competitors left and all of them seem as if they can make some noise towards the end of this tournament.

#2 Mr. Ladouceur vs. #3 Mr. Biebel

This week, Mr. Ladoucer and Mr. Biebel will square off to earn a spot in the finals. This fight is probably one of the best in the bracket.

Mr. Ladouceur stands at approximately 6'2" with a large, athletic frame. A former college football player, specifically a wide-receiver, Ladouceur is quick with the feet and hands, making it tough for his opponents to get anything by him. The most important characteristic that one should know about Mr. Ladouceur is that his beard is one of the key components. Ladouceur's beard is approximately 4-feet in length, with some gorgeous blonde highlights. You may refer to him as Hulk Hogan.

On the other side, Mr. Biebel has some pretty funny comebacks for his opponents. Don't be surprised if Biebel throws at you some of his magic acid he keeps in his back pocket at all times. It can burn his opponents if they aren't careful with their own individual moves. He can also be very dangerous when

using his right-left-right uppercut move to the jaw.

This week's fights are going to be some of the best we've seen in the bracket. Make sure to get out and vote for your favorites!

1st Round Results and 2nd Round Preview

#8 Mr. Colwell vs. #16 Mr. Ng by Alec Thomas and Trent Robison

Mr. Colwell breezed through his first round defeating Mr. Baltzer with ease as the history teacher couldn't find a winning strategy in the history books. Mr. Colwell looks to face the 16 seed Mr. Ng after the draw was blown up after he topped Mr. Smith, the number one seed. When asked about his match up, Mr. Colwell didn't sugar coat his abilities saying, "There are no other competitors that can match my sneaky athleticism and my knowledge of the human body to systematically take down my opponent regardless of their physical ability. After having reached the Final Four last year, I have spent the past year training and preparing for just this event. My tolerance for physical pain and mental anguish will set me apart from the competition." We can see how well he preformed in the first round look for him to heat up as he battles Ng.

Mr. Ng is the big talk of the week as he defeated Mr. Smith in the first round of the teacher fight bracket. This week he takes on Mr. Colwell. Although Ng faces a tough task this week as he takes on the Seminoles fan, Mr. Colwell, Ng has a lot of special hidden talents when it comes to fighting. First off he stands at approximately 6'3" and weighs in at just over 175 pounds. A tall, lean cut of a human-being, Ng loves to go with the upper cut. In fact, he used that move ninety-five percent of his fight against Mr. Smith. Ng doesn't want to tell any of his other secrets as he told the media that he could not answer any questions at this time. Mr. Ng is staying calm,

cool, and collected as he prepares to face a tough opponent. With his win last week over Mr. Smith, there shouldn't be any reason to not pick Ng for not only his round two fight but to win the whole bracket. With his large, strong frame, Ng is unstoppable for the remainder of the fights, and for the rest of the school year.

#4 Coach G vs. #5 Mr. Achille by Jaryn Simpson and Mark Majewski

Mr. Achille, defending champ of the fight bracket, is coming in with a huge win over the 12th seed, Mr. Markley. His matchup for this second round is against Coach G, beloved gym teacher and former Villanova lineman. He thinks that even if Coach G has the body advantage on him he has the experience of winning. From his winnings at the Casinos to the Rambler Cup and even last year's bracket, Mr. Achille is always a fan favorite. He has a great shot of winning it not only just this matchup but also the whole Bracket Challenge.

Coach G has now passed the first round. His next opponent is Mr. Achille. Coach Grychowski feels like he has the upper hand do to his physical ed experience against "math skills". Physical beings can go a lot of way in a fight and that is what Coach G has made his mind up on. Personally, I believe mass and strength would win, but Mr. Achille feels differently. So Coach G could have his hands full, but he looks ready to go. This one will be a mental breakdown for the best to advance to the semifinals. Who will win?

#2 Mr. Ladoucer vs. #10 Mr. Flanagan by Charles Deitrick III and Brian Buseck

Our next matchup is Mr. Mike Flanagan vs Mr. Jason Ladouceur. It is the face off of the facial hair: Mr. Flanagan's handlebar mustache vs Mr. Ladouceur's mountain man beard. Mr. Flanagan has stated that "handlebar is clearly superior against the beard." As far as Flanagan's experience goes, his

grandfather was a professional boxer and "taught him some tricks." When Flanagan was in grad school he worked as a bartender and bouncer at a bar. He did not enjoy the job, but he definitely gets +20 man points for that occupation. Moving on, Mr. Ladouceur knows he has got a tough fight with statements like, "It's gonna be a tough fight, he's pretty athletic and still somewhat spry." But Mr. L is a very, tough quick opponent who shows zero mercy to anybody. He is very mobile as he played football at Gannon University, and is able to portray his skills he had back then, today. "I predict a third round hip knock out," is what he had to say about the end outcome of the fight. The age difference between the two is crucial. While Mr. Flanagan has more experience, Mr. L is younger and a lot more shifty and agile. This is the battle between a conservative war hero and a young hippy. We will let you decide which one is which.

#3 Mr. Biebel vs. #6 Mr. Parsons by Roman Zegarelli and Alex Welz

Biebel vs. Parsons? Laughable matchup. Biebel has more reach, far superior speed, plus military training. Biebel had to fight a professional boxer for coastguard training, so you know Biebel can eat any punch thrown his way... that is if Parsons can land one. Also, Biebel can turn any item into a weapon of opportunity with his vast knowledge. Biebel, a visual learner, has picked up fantastic swordsmanship skills through watching Adventure Time on Cartoon Network. Another advantage Biebel has is his lack of hair. Mr. Biebel can pull Parsons' hair if the battle turns in to a cat fight, but Parsons can't pull Biebel's hair. When asked what the outcome of his fight would be, Mr. Biebel said, "In real life, I've never fought someone who wasn't larger than me, so this would be different." All in all, Biebel would totally take down Parsons.

Welcome to the second annual Ultimate Faculty Fantasy Fighting Championship Bracket, or the UF³C. Our goal is to determine

the answer to one simple hypothetical question: if the teachers in the school were to fight, who would reign supreme? We will have regular updates on matchups as well as the results of who moves on to the next round and commentary from some of the competitors. The staff of *The Rambler* started with 16 teachers and power ranked them to create a bracket. Revisit [last year's results](#) and then read below for a breakdown of this year's field, which includes five new competitors.

#1 seed: Mr. Smith by Charles Deitrick III

Mr. Smith came in hot this year as principal, cracking down on the rules and telling the Prep boys to follow the student handbook. He is also coming in hot for the UF³C bracket as the number one seed. Can he back up his minor league baseball fighting skills that we saw footage of during the first rally? Mr. Smith is often seen at the gym, and takes lots of Creatine, so whoever is in his path, look out! He may very well be the most feared competitor, despite his short stint with the school thus far. Whether its telling students to button their top button or simply giving a hypothetical whooping to these teachers in the UF³C bracket, Mr. Smith is a force to be reckoned with.

#2 seed: Mr. Ladouceur by Charles Deitrick III

Mr. Ladouceur, otherwise known as Coach L, is coming in this year as the second seed after losing in the quarterfinals against Mr. Parsons last year. This teacher is a crazy man. Although his knee isn't really a knee anymore, he can still use his upper body to club and rip. He is often seen running through the woods without shoes on. He is chill for the most part, but if you mess with his garden or tell him to wear shoes, he will unleash his Wolverine side. Ladouceur was once known as Wolverine for his facial hair, but it has gradually transformed into a caveman-like beard. Coach L is young, athletic, and experienced. He provides a lot of energy and should be greatly feared coming into this tournament. He

is insane and will do anything to win.

3 seed: Mr. Biebel by Roman Zegarelli

This “friggin’ dude” is ready to go back to battle after being upset in the quarterfinals last year by his Science Department colleague, Mr. Colwell. Mr. Biebel was in the Coast Guard, so he is no novice to fighting. In fact, Mr. Biebel had to fight a professional boxer while on duty, so he can take punches like a champ. As a physics teacher, Biebel has calculated exactly how to throw the most powerful punches using the WUKWUK equation and projectile motion. Opponents should beware of his powerful spit attacks; they are accurate and deadly. He hasn’t missed the trash can all year with his spit practicing, and sometimes tears a hole in the bag from the sheer force alone. With such an impressive résumé, it would be impossible for Biebel not to be considered an early favorite this year.

#4 seed: Mr. (Chris) Grychowski by Jaryn Simpson

Last year’s top seed, Coach G. is physical education/health teacher at Cathedral Prep. He is well known for his energy boosts of NOS that can really make him stand out in a fight. He is also a very muscular man that has the instincts from his football career. If he is coming at you, you better watch out. He has a great time teaching students how to hit a volleyball and can use that same motion to destroy his opponent. Additionally, he played college football at Villanova and is ready to finally live up to the hype of this tournament after losing in the semifinals last year. He is big, scary, and the last person many want to see matched up against them in this tournament.

#5 seed: Mr. Achille by Mark Majewski

The man, the myth, the legend, Mr. Bob Achille comes into this fight bracket as the defending champion and with years on years of experience. He is also a two-time winner of the Rambler Cup golf tournament. Surely, Mr. Achille knows how to win. He also knows what linear means. He beat some high quality opponents last year on his way to winning the first

UF³C. Widely recognized for his fury in the classroom and even on Twitter, Mr. Achille will try to translate that intimidation to this tournament. Coming into this bracket challenge, Achille is the five seed and is looking to become a back-to-back winner of the UF³C.

#6 seed: Mr. Parsons by Alex Welz

Although young, Mr. Parsons has consistently showcased his poise and readiness for the big stage. He played football all through high school and also was heavily involved (and still is) with wrestling. Mr. Parsons possesses the rare skill set of someone with his level of fitness. He works out constantly, being able to bench press over 400 pounds and making sure cardio is still a priority. Muscle milk is a huge part of his diet, as he also happens to be a health freak in tip top shape. So why is such a young, healthy athlete who works out constantly somehow a six seed? With the given description, how can he possibly be this low, especially after he made a run all the way to the finals last year? Well, despite his brute strength, Mr. Parsons stands a meager 5'6" tall. He lacks the elite wingspan that other participants have. However, his most notable disadvantage may very well be his two knee surgeries along with his limited mobility. Despite these limitations, he has the overall strength, competitiveness, motivation, skill, and drive to overpower anyone he is matched up against.

#7 seed: Mr. Pituch by Trent Robison

Mr. Pituch is looking particularly strong in this year's bracket. Pituch, a member of the 1,000-point club as a Villa basketball player, listed at 6'8" and 220 pounds in the program has massive explosive power. An experienced fighter, he brings a lot of fighting knowledge and tools to the table as he also boxed for Villa back in his day. He can verbally abuse his opponent, always being able to think of quick, effective comebacks on the dime. He can also use logic to talk his way out of trouble as his intellectual/debate skills are off the charts. Look for Mr. Pituch to turn some heads and

finally get over that hump this year after losing in the quarterfinals last year.

#8 seed: Mr. Colwell by Alex Welz

Well known for his athletic ability, Mr. Colwell is ready to take on this tournament after being defeated in the semifinals last year. By now, many students have caught on to his incredible hops, insane strength, and all around savvy. Although Mr. Colwell doesn't hold a Prep legacy like others in this tournament, he has the background and experience to compete with anyone. He isn't scared and won't back down. It would be a huge mistake to undermine the potential of this AP Biology stud as he has overcome the odds time and time again. Watch for him to use his athleticism to his advantage and make a run throughout this tournament. He may look and talk nice, but surely, he is not someone to mess with.

#9 seed: Mr. Baltzer by Mark Majewski

As a Civil War Union soldier reenactor, Mr. Baltzer is familiar with combat. The "veteran" is known for his hand-to-hand combat as well as work with a rifle and a bayonet. The new father is getting his "dad bod" into mid-season form, coming in as the nine seed in this bracket for the second straight year and looking to avenge last year's first round loss. Baltzer is a student favorite and also has some experience on the football field. He is an expert on literally every topic known to man and has the intelligence, along with the physical build, to make a run in this tournament. His matchup against Mr. Colwell could be the most intriguing of this first round.

#10 seed: Mr. (Mike) Flanagan by Jaryn Simpson

Mr. Flanagan served in the Vietnam War, so you can believe he has some major fighting skills. He is a very wise and aggressive man that is willing to do anything for his country. Anyone who has had him as a teacher knows that he exemplifies this exact anger and retaliation in the classroom. Many of his opponents are defeated before they can even throw a punch due

to his sheer intimidation skills. Mr. Flanagan is very tactical and knows the perfect times to attack. He is a scary first round matchup and poses a major upset possibility. This man will do anything to win and has the experience, expertise, knowledge, and fearlessness to get the job done.

#11 seed: Mr. Hubert by Brian Buseck

After a first-round loss last year, seasoned English and Journalism teacher, Mr. Hubert, also known as Hu-bot, is looking to pack a punch in this year's UF³C. He's all charged up and ready to go. He is truly nuts and bolts for this tournament. Know that when his opponent is only starting to plan an attack, Hu-bot's gears have been turning for quite a while, calculating the most precise and advantageous attack possible. Don't make him upset, or he'll short circuit with anger. When this happens, the AP Language and Composition teacher will use his remarkable rhetorical skills to verbally assault his opponent. He will wield his words to get at his opponents deepest insecurities, convincing them that they are no match for the mighty Hu-bot, and making them crumble to the arena floor in tears. This is when he goes in for the win. His basketball career has continued throughout his life, having played against the likes of NBA legend LeBron James in grade school and with Cathedral Prep legend Mr. Colwell in the faculty vs. CYO All-Stars game. These skills prove invaluable. Don't mess with Hu-bot. His energy is electric, and he's laser focused. He's wired and programmed to attack, and he will terminate anyone in his way.

#12 seed: Mr. Markley by Alec Thomas

One of the most underrated contenders coming into this year's UF³C, Mr. Markley looks to make some noise after he was overlooked. Last year, Markley entered the tournament as a 3-seed before being upset in the quarterfinals by eventual champion Mr. Achille. Time and time again, Mr. Markley is proving that he still has what it takes to be the last one standing when the dust settles. After leading the Cathedral

Prep wrestling team to one of its most decorated seasons in school history, we can see he still has that wrestling firepower to put his opponents on the floor. With Mountain Dew as his fuel, we can be sure that we will not see him waver as the fight goes on. A skilled chemist, Markley has hinted that the mysterious element "Marklanium" will be the Kryptonite for his opponents. Look for Mr. Markely to brew up some exciting results.

#13 seed: Mr. Wrigley by Roman Zegarelli

Standing at roughly 7'5" tall, the Muenster of a man, Mr. Wrigley, is ready to give any opponent a knuckle sandwich. His arms are massive from stirring his award winning soups, and his fists are powerful from kneading dough. He's ready to beat any chicken of an opponent, tenderizing them with his clubs. He knows what's at steak in this tournament. Although he is usually at a simmer, he's ready to turn the heat up on the competition. He will take down any opponent... piece of cake. He's ready to put on the sauce. Who has the onions to take on this beefy man in his UF³C debut?

#14 seed: Mr. Daeschner by Trent Robison

Mr. Daeschner was inexcusably left out of last year's inaugural UF³C tournament. Mr. Daeschner isn't one to mess with either. He stands at approximately 6'3" tall and weighs in at approximately 180 pounds with some very thick biceps. The man can really throw a punch. When it comes to intimidation, no one does it better. Just ask some of the freshmen and junior students who have taken his World History classes. Known for his strict rules, and intense classroom discipline, Mr. Daeschner is more than ready for this tournament. He is the longest tenured Prep teacher and is ready to add to his already impressive legacy. Everyone knows not to mess with Mr. Daeschner, and if another faculty member does, don't expect them to show up to class for a few days.

#15 seed: Mr. Vicary by Brian Buseck

Don't mistake Mr. Vicary's inclination towards art as a

disinterest in more traditionally masculine activities. Spending hours a week painting and sketching have made Vicary's arms truly massive. The eons he has spent sculpting clay have sculpted his body into a real life sculpture, comparable in physical condition only to Michaelangelo's iconic David. Along with his physique, Vicary has acquired numerous skills while working out at Pennbriar. His kettle bell workouts have made him into a lean mean fighting machine. Racquetball gives him cat-like reflexes. Spin classes tone his legs to make him capable of darting around any arena faster than Usain Bolt. Rest assured, Vicary plans to paint a masterpiece with his opponents in an attempt to rebound from his first round defeat last year.

#16 seed: Mr. Ng by Alec Thomas

An absolute wildcard in this tournament, Mr. Ng rounds out a highly competitive field as the 16th seed. His scrappy fighting style and verbal abuse of his opponents could leave them flat on their backs as Mr. Ng looks to grind out these fights. The school's 3D printers have been fired up and may produce a WWE-style steel chair for him to use to strike his opponents. With the help of the robotics he has access to, a few modifications could be made to terminate his opponents. On the tactical side, Mr. Ng has to be one of the smartest coming into the fight. Look for complex fighting styles as he turns this into a battle of brain over brawn.