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NOT THAT YOU'D WANT TO, BUT THE POINT IS YOU CAN.

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## FeedBack

### More on Academics

I read your July/August editorial with interest. During my years of college teaching and management (during the 70s, 80s and 90s) I saw first semester failures rise from 7 or 8 percent to the mid-50s percent. During that period students entered college with progressively weaker academic abilities. It wasn't until I was appointed Chair of our academic department that I thought to look into the matter. I couldn't understand why, for example, so many students were failing their first semester math exam. I tracked down the high school curriculum and studied their Grade 12 math curriculum. I was astounded that the Grade 12 math curriculum (Grade 12 mathematics was a subject required for admissions to our program) appeared to be at a similar level as our first semester mathematics curriculum (we had probably unconsciously backed down as we were faced with weaker and weaker students) – yet more than 50% of our students were still failing. How was that possible?

I discovered the answer a few days later when visiting the head of the mathematics department in the local high school. He knew that two of his graduates were in our program – in fact, one of his graduates was in the one class I continued to teach. When he asked how his students were doing, I replied saying that they were nice, polite young men, but they didn't seem to know any trigonometry. He seemed shocked and replied that if he had known that trigonometry was needed for the program, he would have taught it to them. Puzzled, I replied – trigonometry is in the curriculum, how could you not have taught it to them? He said that they had not had a curriculum for decades. Once the students entering high school demonstrated that they could not perform at the Grade 9 level, high school teachers were told that the curriculum was now only a guideline and that they were just to do the best they could. By this time, I had been teaching college for twenty years, and all this time I (along with my fellow faculty members) was not aware that the high school cur-

riculum had been discarded and turned into only a guideline – a very cleverly kept secret.

*Barry Kavanagh  
Via the Internet*

*Editor's Note: Watch for a more in-depth article on this topic by Mr. Kavanagh in a future issue. – M.C.*

### More on Survey Records

In reference to Joel Leininger's article "Survey Record Indices" in the July/August 2006 issue, he described well the need for indices for survey work and mentioned several items that may do the task, but he really did not offer a comprehensive solution.

Our system beginning in 1951 was to create (as is done in libraries throughout the world) 3x5 inch cards for each project – one for the client, one for the subdivision, and one for the township, range and section – a minimum of three cards for each job. On each card is the following: BOOK (field book and page); PORT (file folder using a code system); MAP (the location of the germane plat, *i.e.*, subdivisions, towns, tracts, cemeteries, water-rights, etc). Of course, there are multiple cards if there is more than one client, the seller and purchaser, or more than one Section involved in the platting. Consequently, when responding to a telephone caller asking for information, we can usually answer the question while talking to the caller if we get a clue. Our file has more than 30,000 cards and we are now in the process of entering all of them into a computer database.

*Paul N. Scherbel, LS  
Surveyor Scherbel, Ltd.*

**Got some feedback?** We always enjoy hearing from our readers. You can contact us via our website at [www.amerisurv.com](http://www.amerisurv.com), or send a letter to: *The American Surveyor*, P.O. Box 4162, Frederick, MD 21705-4162. We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity and length. Due to the variety of titles used by licensed surveyors throughout the U.S., we use the title LS after the name of any registered land surveyor.