



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on October 5, 2022

Idiocracy Cometh: Students Shocked That Organic Chemistry Is Hard; Get Professor Fired

It's a course that "weeds out the doctors from the wannabes," wrote FastWeb last year about notoriously difficult organic chemistry. This hasn't stopped a group of Big Apple wannabes, however, from getting an organic chemistry professor fired because his class is "too hard." The kicker is that the professor, Maitland Jones, Jr., is highly accomplished in his field — in fact, he wrote the book on it.

(Or, at least, *a* book on it.)

The *Daily Mail* [summarizes](#) the story:

- Maitland Jones Jr., 84, was fired from New York University after 82 of his 350 students signed a petition against him
- Students claimed course materials for his organic chemistry class were too hard and blamed Jones for their poor test scores
- Jones previously taught at Princeton before moving to a yearly contract teaching at NYU, and later wrote a 1,300-page textbook on the subject he taught
- Jones said he noticed students struggling to reintegrate to in-person classes post-COVID-19...
- Former students and NYU faculty defended Jones, citing poor conduct from students



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The *Mail* also tells us that "Jones was not alone in the pushback from students in the return from pandemic learning. Kent Kirshenbaum, another organic chemistry professor, discovered students cheating during online tests. Citing poor conduct in his decision to reduce grades, students protested by saying 'they were not given grades that would allow them to get into medical school.'"

The implications of this were not lost on internet commenters. "Poorly educated doctors — every pharmaceutical company's dream clients," wrote "Connie" under the *Mail* piece. And "Karl44" observed, "This 'participation trophy' generation now expects a participation degree! If this is the future of America, we are in real trouble!"

As for the complaining students, they wrote in their petition, "We are very concerned about our scores,



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and find that they are not an accurate reflection of the time and effort put into this class,” *The New York Times* related.

“The students criticized Jones’s reduction of the number of opportunities to make up for bad grades, complained about his lack of extra credit, slammed his choice to discontinue Zoom access to his lectures and pointed to his apparent ‘condescending and demanding’ tone, according to *The Times*,” TND [added](#). “The petition even went so far as to allege Jones was concealing course averages.”

The issue may, however, have much to do with the “Twitter generations” short attention spans, as Jones said that he noticed a “loss of focus” in students just a couple of years after he made his 2007 switch from Princeton to NYU.

“As students returned from virtual learning as a result of the pandemic, that problem only got worse. Students were not studying and, Jones said, students seemingly did not know how to,” the *Mail* also tells us.

“We now see single digit scores and even zeros,” the academic lamented.

““They weren’t coming to class, that’s for sure, because I can count the house,” Jones said,” the paper further relates. ““They weren’t watching the videos, and they weren’t able to answer the questions.””

At first, NYU “officials tried to pacify the students by offering to review their grades, and allowing them a one-time exception to withdraw from the class even after it was completed, *The Times* reported,” TND writes. But the school then decided to terminate Jones’ contract prior to the fall semester’s start in deference to the complaining undergraduates.

Yet are the students’ struggles surprising? As Ryan Xue, who took Jones’ course in the past, told the *Times*, “This is a big lecture course, and it also has the reputation of being a weed-out class. So there are people who will not get the best grades” (or even the second-best grades).

As the aforementioned 2021 FastWeb [article](#) points out, organic chemistry is the *absolute hardest college course in existence*, according to students. Given this, is it really surprising that 82 out of 350 students — 23.4 percent — would struggle? Isn’t it, in fact, *desirable* that academics designed to prepare people for life-or-death roles (e.g., medicine) should weed out all but the best qualified? Jones’ firing seems a bit like dumbing down Navy SEAL training simply because most men attempting it fail.

Unfortunately, the NYU students’ complaints reflect modern, snowflake-spawning parenting, where children aren’t told “No,” or that not every feeling they have is deific, and that whining doesn’t always get them what they want (though, tragically, today it too often does).

Also coming to mind here is a man I met who expressed an all-too-common fallacy, claiming that the idea that some people have gifts others don’t is not only incorrect, but un-Christian. But not everyone could write a piece of music at age four, as Mozart did; or break 50 on nine holes of golf at age three, as Tiger Woods did; or soar on the basketball court, as Michael Jordan did. God gifts us with different things — not *every* thing.

In this vein, certain IQ ranges [are associated with certain fields](#), and here’s a hard, cold fact: Not everyone will be intelligent enough to excel in organic chemistry — and an average IQ [doesn’t pass muster](#) in medicine.

What’s more, what doesn’t bode well is that IQs are [actually declining](#). Not that this will stop the idiots, though. They’ve already dumbed-down standards across the board, including for [air traffic controllers](#), [pilots](#), and [police](#). So what does it matter if this is applied to the medical establishment, too?



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It's not as if doctors' performance could be worse than it was during Covid, anyway. Right?



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