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CoolCampus: A Day at the University of the Future

I entered the airlock doors, the smell from outside began to dissipate as the filtered air conditioning replaced it with air that was safe, clean and odourless. Welcome to another day at the University that is so much safer than the world outside; some would say it is too safe. Keep in mind that this story will be prone to sarcasm.

The airlock opens, but not before the computerised voice says “Watch your step, please remove your shoes in the locker room to your right and make sure you report any suspicious people. Have a nice day!” *Maybe I should just report myself...*I thought as I walked into the locker room, for a place that emphasises cleanliness, the foot locker room sure does smell, but that is not just a result of outdoor pollution, it has much more to do with student pollution, just think of the places those shoes have been; share houses, sports fields, bars, pubs and clubs and the often sticky, sickly walking areas these places have. I’ll have to insist that the university invest in one of those automatic dry cleaners.

I walk out into the hallway; the carpet is warm to the touch of my feet. A steady temperature of fifteen degrees heats the university carpet, all through the colder months. IT students have been known to hack the system and convert their floors into kitchen stoves, causing many a burn and blistering for the unaware, but hey, the two minute noodles require some sort of sacrifice.

The cameras scan me as I approach the security checkpoint, I’m sure they’ll just about be able to see everything I’ve got on me, so much that security would be able to guess the last time I changed my underwear. To add a human face to the system the guard asks for my student ID card; it’s strange to see a guard like this who carry’s no



visible weapon, I guess it's sometimes the things we don't see that really scare us.

As I move on to my first lecture, girls and guys are sitting around the student lounge checking their email, chatting and some are actually doing work! The university has a complete wireless system for PDA internet access, so that wherever you go, you're connected...even in the toilet. However, just like any system it is open to abuse, with one male looking suspicious in a corner of the room and I swore I could hear the sound of that star of the early naughties (00's), American Idol William Hung, coming from his machine.

I move on to my lecture theatre where I have to use a fingerprint scanner to get in, this is because of all the people that have been sneaking into lectures over the years. How could we let all these people in to learn for free? This is a great system, because we need to discourage learning as much as possible.

By lunch time I go to the campus café, it looks like it's out of an Ikea catalogue. All of the furniture is smoothed at the edges and attached to the floor, a surface that could make the heaviest weight bounce. All of the food is cut up before being served, so there are none of those dangerous knives used, it's like getting baby food from a crèche. I do feel a bit threatened by those forks on display.

Spending time in the library was frustrating as the robot librarian has a real problem with rebellious students and I just happened to like putting my feet up. It really is as quiet as a mouse in the library, every reading cubicle is like a soundproofed box and the noise of books moving has been replaced by the hum of computers displaying the digitised copies of most of the entire inventory.

My afternoon was lost to the search for one of my lecturer, who was busy conducting question and answer sessions for other students...on



the other side of the world. He can do this from the comfort of his own office, but he is not to be disturbed according to the administration's rules, so as not to disrupt the holographic projection. I can't help thinking of the idea of his machine image and voice being replaced with a cartoon character; his speeches would be eternally interesting. Imagine the confusion in Nigeria as he discusses basic accounting concepts in the "I tawt I taw a puttie cat" voice of Tweety.

After giving up all hope of contact, I left the great sterility of the University and gave myself to the great sludge of the outside world.