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Campus comedy 101

Hollywood loves movies about college — they have all the sex and fun of high-school films, without all those annoying parents getting in the way.

The mack daddy of college movies is 1978's "National Lampoon's Animal House," which showed students cramming for the single most important event of college. No, not final exams — toga parties. "College," opening Friday and starring Drake Bell of TV's "Drake & Josh," follows the same format of pretty much ignoring classes and studying and all that worthless stuff in favor of a crash course in fun. Here's how other higher-education romps scored.

BACK TO SCHOOL (1986)

The curriculum: College is wasted on the young. Uptight kid Jason (future director Keith Gordon) is so miserable at school that his crass, fun-loving dad (Rodney Dangerfield) decides to enroll and make sure Junior has a gas.

The grade: Shakespeare for everybody! Along with "Caddyshack," this is the movie that perfectly suited the late, great Dangerfield, who got all the respect in the world for these obvious, low-brow and very funny comedies. Give it an A-

HOW HIGH (2001)

The curriculum: Method Man and Redman are stoners who smoke magical weed and therefore ace their SATs and get into Harvard,



where the student body desperately needs to mellow out. The guys help.

The grade: Spreading the stoner culture is at the heart of all genuine multicultural college party movies, and Method Man and Redman smoke out fun wherever they go. Grade: Uh, we forget. A? B?

REVENGE OF THE NERDS (1984)

The curriculum: High school was for the jocks, but college — along with life — is for the nerds. Right, Bill Gates? Geeks with names like Poindexter and Booger are led to glory by top



nerd Anthony Edwards.

The grade: Revenge is sweet, especially when it's well-deserved and dished out to hateful jocks. Nerds always get the best grades, so give it an A+.

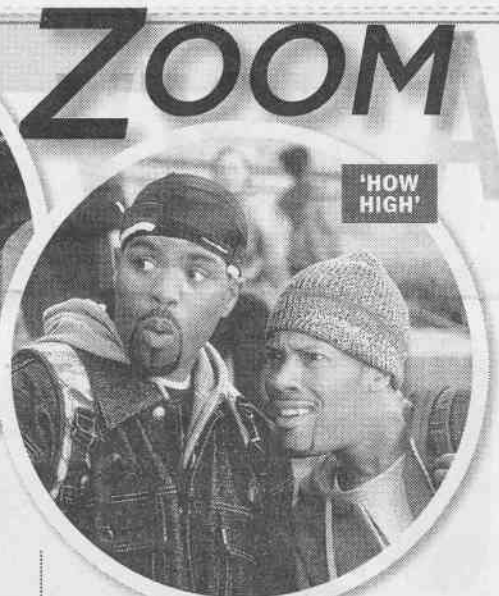
ACCEPTED (2006)

The curriculum: Getting into college can be unacceptably stressful, so Justin Long (the Mac guy in those PC vs. Mac ads) decides to make up his own school. Hordes of low-scoring students show up for registration.

The grade: The spirit is right, and they can definitely party. But there's an awful lot of unpleasant learning going on at this school. C-

REAL GENIUS (1985)

The curriculum: Chris Knight (a young and endearing Val Kilmer) is the science-fair geek of geeks who spends a lot more time planning elaborate pranks than anything as boring as



studying. Well done!

The grade: Chris eventually helps develop a laser. It's all in good fun until an evil professor (is there any other kind?) steals it for the military. The kids swipe it back and have a ball doing it. That extra-credit work earns them a B+.

HAROLD & KUMAR GO TO WHITE CASTLE (2004)

The curriculum: Harold (John Cho) is too focused on studying. Kumar (Kal Penn) probably hasn't even bought his textbooks yet — but he's acing the all-important late-night study break. Pot smoking + munchies = trip to fast-food joint.

The grade: Numerous parties, dissing of townies, racial barriers studiously ignored plus Neil Patrick Harris mean H&K go to the head of the class. This gets a solid A. *Michael Giltz*