

OLD GOLD AND BLACK

The Student Newspaper of Wake Forest University
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EDITORIALS

Alter campus life, not just lounges

Campus bureaucrats seem bent on installing burdensome rules on students this semester. Now the Student Life Committee has joined the fray, wanting to reapprove each organization's lounge space every three years.

In the past, each social organization was trusted enough to use its space in an appropriate manner, and the SLC only intervened when problems arose.

By all accounts, the current system works smoothly. We are reminded of Pi Kappa Epsilon's 1993 loss of its Kitchin House lounge space after that fraternity committed a number of offenses. Not until the end of this semester will PiKA receive a new lounge.

So it is not as though social organizations with lounge space are currently given free rein. The SLC already requires organizations to utilize their space and keep it in good condition. If PiKA or any other organization breaks the SLC's rules, its lounge space comes up for review. And the SLC has obviously not been afraid to punish offenders.

Frankly, it is hard to see what the problem is here. Does the SLC simply want another bureaucratic responsibility? Or is this another effort to force-feed intellectualism to students here?

The criteria SLC plans to use to evaluate whether an organization deserves its space are quite broad: community service, academic history, commitment to campus intellectual and cultural life. These criteria may be noble in intent, but they would be almost impossible to evaluate objectively.

How much community service will prove sufficient to merit an organization's keeping lounge space? 10 hours per member per semester? 20 hours? Should organizations whose main function is social be held to the same standards as service fraternities like Alpha Phi Omega?

An organization's commitment to campus intellectual and cultural life would be even harder to measure. Perhaps the SLC plans to require members of social organizations to devote their lounge space to a certain number of cultural or academic activities each year. While such a requirement would produce the outward appearance of increased intellectualism on campus, coercing social groups to sponsor intellectual events is no way to effect a real change in student attitudes.

If students were required to attend cultural events, they would approach these activities the same way they do classes. Real intellectual curiosity would be just as lacking as it is now; students would feign it to fulfill intellectual or cultural requirements, just as they do to earn high grades.

If the university really wants to improve intellectual life on campus, then it should take a look at the pressure-cooker atmosphere that compels students to spend every free hour studying. Not many students have time for or interest in intellectualism after a week of endless homework, papers, tests and all-night study sessions.

Or perhaps the problem lies with the kind of students who attend this institution. Does the admissions office accept too many anti-intellectual prospectives? Threatening Greek and other organizations with loss of lounge space if they and their members do not become more cultured would certainly not solve that problem.

Again, it is easy to put on the appearance of intellectual curiosity for the purpose of satisfying the SLC's demands. Real scholastic interest is much harder to come by.

So which came first, the partying students or the fraternities and sororities? This chicken-and-egg question does not lend itself to an easy answer, and attempting to legislate it away by reallocating lounge space or forcing Greek groups to become more academically oriented would be only a cosmetic solution.

Instead of adding bureaucratic procedures and attempting to remake social organizations into cultural interest groups, the SLC and other groups ought to take a hard look at potential long-term solutions for the university's anti-intellectual atmosphere.

For admissions to court students with intellectual curiosity might be a start. Maybe if incoming freshman classes showed greater intellectual interest, professors would be encouraged to show the same interest. Perhaps vibrant intellectual discussions held in their classes would begin spilling over into students' social lives.

Then, just maybe, more students would major or at least minor in one of the humanities or arts rather than jumping into science or business without looking back. Perhaps a true life of the mind would develop, sparked in the classroom but continuing far beyond its walls.

Such a solution would not require forced alterations to the Greek system; it might fade away, or it might merely adapt to the changes in campus life. But this solution would require a personal effort on the part of virtually everyone involved with the university.

And it would be an attempt at real change, unlike many of the solutions the administration and others have banded about lately. Threatening social organizations with reallocation of lounge space unless they start appearing more intellectual would simply be one more failed attempt at cosmetic alteration.

Families not impressed by dull weekend

Don't get me wrong: I am glad that my mom and dad came down for "Family Weekend." It's just that, well, I had no clue about what to do with them. When I'm home, I spend the days working and most nights out with my friends. The only extended interaction I have with my parents comes at meals and an occasional family outing.

Now, this past weekend, they were my responsibility for an entire two days and I had to think of some way to entertain them. What was I, a 19-year-old college student, going to do with two fifty-somethings for an entire weekend?

We did what most families did — shopped and ate. Mom and Dad provided me with a much needed break from the Pit. They also bought me just about everything I needed and even many things I didn't.

After two trips to Super Kmart, one to Wal-Mart, one to Kroger and a trip to the mall, I just about ran out of entertainment venues. Unfortunately, Family Weekend had turned into little more than a chance to freeload off my parents. If shopping was all we were going to do, it would have been a lot cheaper for them to just send me a check. The problem wasn't finding things I like to do or things that they would enjoy but figuring

ZACH EVERSON
GUEST COLUMNIST

out things that would appeal to all three of us.

The university didn't help. For the most part they only offered things that appealed to no one. There were the Fettucini brothers, a piano performance, and the Reynolda House Museum of Art, just to name a few of the exciting events scheduled. I'm still trying to understand why my parents should spend the money on air fare, a hotel room and a rental car just to go to an art museum or a comedy show?

The tailgate and ensuing football game were the only school related events of which I took advantage. Tailgating was fun because it provided my parents with a chance to meet my friends and their parents. Something, however, was missing. It took me a little while to figure out what, but then it became obvious — undercover Alcohol Law Enforcement agents were not there. I guess the officers, who supposedly have nothing to do with the school, just happened to take a break on family weekend. On a related note, did someone give the meter maids a vacation this past weekend? The university must have realized

that it might alienate parents if it continued the policy of raising funds via parking tickets.

The football game was the focal point of the weekend. This was my first game of the year, and I got free tickets. I truly feel sorry for the parents who had to pay \$18 a piece to go to the game. Even though the game was exciting, \$20,000 should be sufficient to merit a free ticket or two for the people who foot the bill. After all, it's not as if there is a big demand for our football tickets.

If university truly wants to impress parents, it should schedule events that people will attend. How about a catered lunch (not by ARAMARK!!!) in Reynolda Gardens, or a convocation, or anything that would build a relationship among parents, students and the school.

The responsibility to provide entertainment does not lie with the Greeks, Student Union or any other student group. The duty to accommodate the parents rests with the administration. After all, an important purpose of Family Weekend is to justify to parents why they send us here.

If university officials devoted half as much interest to Family Weekend as they do to the Lilly Report, I'm positive that they could develop some interesting and entertaining programs that would appeal to both students and parents.

AKRON BEACON JOURNAL LOGS



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Campus disables

Has anyone ever associated the sensation of rollerblading on campus to that of using a wheelchair?

I was curious one afternoon, as I performed laps around the Quad on my Bauer's, and I asked myself, how would a physically handicapped student, confined to a wheelchair or crutches, or perhaps even visually impaired, live a decent life at Wake Forest University?

Not only did I consider this question, but I further asked myself, are there any physically handicapped students attending this university?

Despite all of the students I have run into, I'd never seen one in a wheelchair. When answering the question of feasibly living on campus, one must consider the housing issue. Anyone who has to use an elevator or ramp to get around efficiently and comfortably might as well forget enjoying life on the Quad.

As far as I know, there are not any convenient places to get around in Kitchin, Davis, Taylor, Poteat, Eford or Huffman, unless you have jump jets on your wheelchair or crutches. We'll skip the Townhouses, Palmer and Piccolo altogether, unless one is interested in self-torture.

What about the dorms on South Campus? Only one freshman dorm, Collins Hall, has an elevator. Even then a handicapped student would have to find a way to get up to the upper level of south campus via the steps around the Vegas Computer Lab.

Assuming that the folks in Residence Life and Housing allowed a freshman to enjoy life in Babcock or Luter Residence Halls, could physically handicapped freshmen really enjoy living with sorority sisters and upperclassmen rather than other freshmen? Is the physically handicapped student even remotely included in the concept of "community living" at the university?

Getting to and from classes as a physically handicapped student further complicates the problem. Granted, there are elevators in many of the classroom buildings.

But you can imagine the difficulty of making one's way from any south campus classroom to Wingate Hall or

Scales Fine Arts Center in a reasonable amount of time. To manage your way onto or near the Quad, you would have to take the sidewalk route from the front of Tribble Hall, go around the left side of the Benson Center near the library, and make your way to the sidewalk that runs parallel to Davis Hall. Such a route isn't bad, until you turn right in front of the Kappa Sigma tower and end up at the base of a stairway onto the Quad between Davis and Taylor Halls.

Of course, the entrance at the top of the mighty hill running beside Kitchin House provides a ramp for easier access to the Quad. This is assuming you have the strength and time to make it up the hill. One might argue in favor of the Reynolda Hall route, using an elevator to get to the Quad, but it consumes about the same amount of time and patience.

The consumption of food reveals yet another facet of the difficulty a physically handicapped student faces at Wake Forest. Getting into the Benson food court is easy enough. But, actually getting food there is another matter entirely. Let's assume that the student confined to a wheelchair or crutches gets into the food court easily enough. Does that ease carry on into the grill, deli and bakery area?

During the lunch rush on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, a student confined to a wheelchair would be hard-pressed to make his or her way to the grill, grab a bagel or reach the newspaper rack without suffering from a claustrophobic fit waiting in line and running into other students packed into the area like sardines.

Even the Pit, at its busiest, would present a daunting task for the physically handicapped student who merely wanted something to eat. Granted, there is always the option of having someone, perhaps a close friend, take care of all these minor college details for you. But who wants to sacrifice the dignity that comes from conquering physical handicaps by accepting unnecessary pity and help from others?

The reader may be asking him or herself, "What the heck does he know about physically handicapped individuals anyway?"

After living nearly 15 years with a

young, intelligent brother who has been confined to a wheelchair and crutches for his entire life and only barely survived a backwards North Carolina public school system, I can safely say that I have been around the block with the physically handicapped.

Many individuals such as my brother want to enjoy the sometimes meager independence of movement that they're allotted in life. He is adamant about cherishing that independence, wary of ever relinquishing it, even for the direst of emergencies. The physically-handicapped high school senior daring to tackle the academic challenges of a Wake Forest education shouldn't worry about the professors and courses when considering this university. Such concerns are mere trifles compared to the immensely daunting tasks of living a relatively normal daily life on this campus as a physically handicapped individual.

I wish to congratulate Wake Forest. You, the administrators and campus planners, have opened the door to the Class of 2000 with the prospects of freshman seminars, mobile computing and Ethernet connections in every dorm. You have agreed to investigate an expanded Shorty's facility to provide an on-campus solution to student alcohol consumption. The Pit itself has been transformed into a neon-clad eatery offering a plethora of culinary choices for the students!

Despite all of the pomp and circumstance associated with a prestigious academic curriculum, ultra-modern computer facilities and the promise to allow every academically and financially qualified student a chance at entrance into this university, you have grievously forgotten some of the best student material available to you.

You have forgotten those few, intellectually stimulated individuals whose hearts and souls yearn for the opportunity to absorb college life and learning at an institution that represents one of the best southern schools around. In your race to bestow all of the technological and academic amenities possible on your students, you have neglected those blessed with the potential to move mountains in life, regardless of their inabilities.

You have forsaken my brother. Although he has several years before he has to worry about applying for college, he will eventually consult me. And, if he ever asks me how Wake Forest would be for him, I will tell him this. I will tell him about my trips rollerblading around campus. I will tell him and his intellectual fervor to seek education elsewhere.

I will tell him to do so because I'd rather see him struggle to excel under a mentally demanding curriculum than struggle to live on a physically demanding campus.

Michael R. Burns

Student rights?

Having survived the superheated rhetoric of Yeazel's reaction to the Lilly Report, I was able to find something that may reveal the motivation of his perfervid piece. He thinks that "education is about identifying options, not robbing people of them." One is left to wonder what this means, but one possibility is that he sees no significant difference between education and freedom or between what education is about and what the prevalent modern conception of freedom is about.

Which raises the question whether Yeazel's displeasure extends to the limitations placed on such freedom by basic, divisional and other academic requirements. May one limit options in these ways in the process of "identifying options?" Presumably he thinks the matter should be left to students to decide, since he takes "student sovereignty" for granted. It is this sovereignty that is supposedly threatened by the Report. I must say that, given the options seemingly preferred these days, I was amazed to learn that the Lilly Committee has a "stranglehold on everything unrelated to its culture and everything that is (I assume, truly) enjoyable."

Charles Lewis
Professor of Philosophy

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