

OLD GOLD AND BLACK

The Student Newspaper of Wake Forest University
Founded in 1916

EDITORIALS

Open hearings build confidence

In its own right, freshman Mike Emmet's hearing before the Judicial Board would not be that interesting.

What makes the case interesting is that Emmet's hearing was opened to the public. It was the first such hearing in almost two years.

Under current rules, judicial hearings can only be opened at the request of the accused student. Of course, even then, the hearings are only opened to people invited by the defendant and one reporter from the *Old Gold and Black*. The university's honor system follows similar guidelines.

Naturally, problems arise when the systems that claim to uphold justice and honor operate under closed and secretive conditions. Such a closed system ultimately works to undermine faith in the judicial process. For the most part, the system of justice remains a mystery for students.

Because students are denied access to these hearings, they have little understanding of what exactly constitutes an infraction and how varying circumstances in such

cases bear on the punishments meted out by the Judicial Board.

Perhaps most importantly, students cannot determine how well the system works. We don't know if the cases are being decided too leniently or too strictly.

And we therefore are not well-qualified to judge how well our elected Judicial Board and Honor Council members are performing their jobs.

The same forces work to make both the administration and the faculty doubt the integrity of the university's judicial system.

It's not surprising that a recent university report concluded the university's honor system suffers from a "crisis in confidence."

How could anyone have confidence in a system that spends so much energy preventing the public from knowing what exactly it does?

Almost everyone says they want to improve the judicial system. If this rhetoric is to be translated into reality, however, we must first lift the veil of secrecy that surrounds the university's judicial process and open it up to public scrutiny.

All students need voice on council

Few topics have received as persistent attention as the university's academic climate. According to some, the problem is we don't have one.

The charge is a gross exaggeration. But there is a growing consensus that the university's academic climate needs an overhaul.

Finding out how to accomplish that feat will be one of the primary goals of the Provost Student Advisory Council. Senior Greg Cran and Provost David G. Brown, who worked together this semester to create the council, say PSAC will give students a greater voice in the university's decision-making processes. Cran and Brown also say the committee will improve relations between students and the administration and function as a source for new ideas.

We congratulate the university for taking a step that will actually increase student input at the university. This makes even more sense in this particular case because students obviously must bear much of the burden of improving the intellectual environment, particularly outside the classroom.

But we also wish to remind the provost that the committee should represent a variety of student interests. For example, nominations were restricted to members of just

15 student organizations.

The memo sent to the organizations also specified that nominees possess several characteristics, including a "strong academic background."

While academic achievement is important, we hope the provost does not have some preconceived notion of what type of background a qualified student will have. In particular, having a high GPA should not become a primary qualification.

Since the university's academic climate affects all students, it does not make sense to allow only the "highest" achievers to have access to the council. Moreover, improving academics will require reaching out to more students with modest GPAs, as they make up the bulk of the student population.

Giving these students a voice on the council will also improve the likelihood that the council is truly representative. If students do not feel like the group speaks for them, the council probably will be unable to meet its goal of improving university relations.

Finally, we must remember that improving the university's academic climate will require energetic students with creative ideas, another trait that cannot be measured by GPA.

Fitting presents for all at Christmas

ZACH EVERSON
STUDENT COLUMNIST

As the winter holidays approach, people everywhere are in the gift-giving mood. I've been so enthralled with the holiday spirit that not only have I bought presents for my friends and family, but I've even purchased gifts for many groups and individuals here in the university community.

The following is a list of the presents that I plan to give.

For Facilities Management, I purchased enough cement to fill in the entire campus. That would help ensure that there are no unsightly dirt paths. Hopefully, one day there will be no grass on school property.

To the Traffic Patrol, I'm giving more speed bumps and stop lights to handle the terrible traffic congestion that we suffer on campus.

I bought the football team a win, seeing how they have trouble earning one.

I had purchased a fleet of new cars for Campus Police, so they wouldn't have to drive those beat-up cars that are about two years old.

Before I got a chance to give them my gift, however, I found out that they just bought new cars. So instead I purchased them some new cameras which they can post in the numerous campus trouble spots. I'll give them the cars next year when they'll want new ones again.

To the philosophy department, I'm giving a reason for existence.

I bought a few pounds of poison to leave under the Christmas tree for our beloved rats.

Not wanting to be wasteful, I plan on giving ARAMARK the dead rats. They can't taste any worse or be any less nutritious than the regular

I wanted to get Dean Escott a really nice present, as he is truly deserving of one. Unfortunately, however, I've already bought too many nice presents, so he'll just have to settle for an average one. I wouldn't want to be a part of gift inflation.

items on the menu.

I'll be giving tickets to "The Dating Game" to all students.

I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm very concerned about the housekeepers. They are forced to stand or sit on the stairs while talking in the stairwells.

To remedy that injustice, I bought the housekeeping staff some nice cozy chairs to put in the stairwells.

To the foreign language department I'm giving students who actually want to take their classes.

Just in case they don't already have them, I'm giving the Greek organizations stereotypes.

I'll be giving the bookstore \$300 worth of books (they'll be giving me back \$30).

In preparation for next year's implementation of the Plan for the Class of 2000, I purchased the Computer Center a bottle of Advil to handle all of the headaches.

Just in case we don't already have one, I'm giving the university an inferiority complex when compared to Duke.

For every university sports team except for men's basketball, I am giving some fan support.

For Ken Zick, vice president for student life and instructional resources, I bought a nice pad of university stationary for all of those notes he writes to the parents of students who were caught drinking.

To WAKE Radio I give the capacity to broadcast over the airwaves, as it seems that they'll never get the ability any other way.

I wanted to get Dean Escott a really nice present, as he is truly deserving of one.

Unfortunately, however, I've already bought too many nice presents, so he'll just have to settle for an average one. I wouldn't want to be a part of gift inflation.

Please, don't tell anyone about these gifts — I want them to be a secret.

ARTIST: BRANT ARMENTROUT © 95

BOX



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Request denied

In your last issue you reported on a recent Student Government debate about whether or not to fund a Mortar Board service project. I was most disturbed by the reported debate and the kinds of issues being raised by Student Government representatives in attacking the organization's request for support from the contingency fund.

It raises a number of questions in my mind, and I hope in the mind of others, about the contingency fund and its purpose. I am writing to encourage the paper and the "constituents" of Student Government to investigate this fund and to encourage students to support the Mortar Board project.

I am the faculty adviser for Mortar Board. It is a national senior honor society that recognizes excellence in scholarship and service. Its members are chosen because they have excelled in the classroom and have demonstrated a commitment to service.

For this reason I can think of no organization that does more to represent the ideals of the university.

Unlike many honor societies there is an expectation that the membership will continue to engage in service to the university and wider communities.

There have been years when the organization has not always lived up to this ideal but this year is not one of them.

This fall the group committed itself to two projects, one that is university wide (Project Pumpkin) and one that it initiated itself (the book drive).

The book collection project came about as the result of one member's overseas experience this past summer. She was surprised to discover the lack of resources in university libraries in Pakistan. More investi-

gation showed this to be a widespread problem in less developed countries. Recognizing the vast numbers of used books that go unused in our society, she hit upon the idea of collecting these books and shipping them to libraries in these other countries.

When this project was proposed to the Mortar Board membership it was greeted with enthusiasm. Some members began immediately to collect books from their departments. It was immediately apparent that the primary expense would be the shipping costs and it was decided that our treasurer would request funding from Student Government to help support this project.

Mortar Board receives no regular funding from Student Government. Until this project we have been able to conduct our activities without seeking outside support.

The Student Government contingency fund has \$19,000 halfway through the school year. Mortar Board is asking for \$2,000.

Members of Mortar Board who have served in Student Government tell us that the fund is never exhausted in any given year.

What I would like to know, and what I think the paper and the students should be asking, is how this money gets spent.

If a project as worthwhile as the Mortar Board one cannot be funded because Student Government wishes to save money for "more worthy" projects, it would help us to know what those possible future uses might be.

How has this money been allocated in the past? What kind of contingencies are deemed worthy and for what sort of organizations?

Mortar Board intends to renew its request for funding when the Student Government meets in January. In the meantime, I urge students to ask these kinds of questions. They may call their student legislators and

ask them to support the book collection project of Mortar Board. They should ask them to account for how decisions have been made in the past about the allocation of contingency fund moneys.

If they don't know who represents them as a legislator, they should call Student Government (Ext. 5293) and let them know what they think.

Finally, students can support the book drive by contributing used books (there will be boxes around campus this week and next).

Katy J. Harriger
Associate Professor of Politics
Faculty Adviser, Mortar Board

Beauty destroyed

In our endless quest for a "perfect" world, one replete with a manicured Quad, crosswalks at every conceivable walking angle, and air conditioning in every room, we have somehow lost sight of our "natural" world. Case in point, the paving of part of the trail that goes around Reynolda Gardens.

A little thing, the cynics might say, only a half-mile in length and six feet in width, and besides, it keeps your shoes from getting muddy.

To many the wood-chip trail represents a brief respite from exhaust-filled, asphalt America or yesterday's chemistry exam.

Whether walking with a friend or running with clipped wings, this trail is harmonious with the environment and purifying for the soul.

The soft surface is a grave for our frustrations and a vault for our dreams; can the "perfect" energy return of asphalt soak in these rumination?

The cynic in me says no.

Brant ArmentROUT

Apology extended

I would like to extend an apology to anyone offended by my most recent letter to the editor. While it was intended to cause controversy, it was not intended as an insult to this university or the students here. I write out of a deep-felt concern for the future of this institution and the belief that we, as a university community, must submit ourselves to self-criticism if we wish to improve. I did, however, overstep my bounds in some of the comments that I made and I wish to restate myself to rectify my mistakes.

I agree with John Morris ("Pride in Education," Nov 30) that the students at this university are, for the most part, genuinely good people. However, I believe, as Charles Starks does ("Economic Realities," Nov. 30) that many students here, for one reason or another, are concerned with their grade as opposed to what they learn whether inside or outside of class (I agree that we learn a great deal outside the classroom; I may have implied otherwise). I intended only to state that this fact influences grades and should not be ignored, and I apologize that I implied that it somehow affects one's value as a human being.

I believe that no particular student, including myself, is an ideal student because human beings are imperfect even when they are not faced with outside pressures such as monetary concerns. Nor do I propose Harvard University, Duke University or any other school as ideal for they have their own problems.

Am I comparing this university to some imagined ideal, then? Yes. Why should we not strive for the ideal? Again, I apologize for the inappropriate wording I used.

Andrew Frey

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The *Old Gold and Black* encourages members of the Wake Forest community to address current issues through letters to the editor. To reserve a guest column call the editorials editor at Ext. 5280 at least one week in advance of publication.

We do not accept public thank-you notes. Corrections will run in the corrections box on page two. All letters to the editor must include the author's name and phone number, although anonymity in print may be requested. Submissions should be typewritten and double-spaced.

We appreciate contributions submitted via floppy disk or the university network. Letters should be delivered to Benson 518, mailed to P.O. Box 7569 Reynolda Station, Winston-Salem, NC 27109, sent via electronic mail to letters@ogb.wfu.edu, or faxed to (910) 759-4561.

The *Old Gold and Black* reserves the right to edit, without prior notice, all copy for grammatical or typographical errors, and also to cut letters as needed to meet layout requirements.

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