

Kappa Sigma fraternity's trial was conducted unfairly

Administrators made a mockery of justice.

Since the time that the administration's investigation of Kappa Sigma became public knowledge, our fraternity has encountered an avalanche of misguided perceptions, arising primarily as a result of distorted or erroneous information.

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Because the university administration has, until this juncture, provided the exclusive outlet for community awareness about the issue, I feel compelled to render a fraternity response in order to dispel the many rumors which have been circulating.

Specifically, Kappa Sigma was charged with hazing and unauthorized activity on school property. These violations were a result of findings suggesting that fraternity members took part in the organization of pledge activities which included calisthenics and underage consumption of alcohol.

Although the Kappa Sigma fraternity in no way condones such activities, we strongly believe that our chapter was treated unjustly by the administrative investigation and subsequently received an unreasonable punishment.

Members of the chapter felt that

complete cooperation with university officials would prove to be most beneficial in achieving a fair and prompt resolution to the issue. However, we could not have been any farther from the truth in this assumption. From the onset of the investigation, the university conducted a full-scale witch-hunt whereby fraternity members were immediately branded as treacherous and disreputable.

The administrative investigators never took the opportunity to listen to us so that they might truly find out what went on and who was involved. Instead, for our fraternity members, it was a matter of guilt by association. Indeed, the Kappa Sigma organization will now be used as an example for the entire Greek system to look at with contempt.

The trial itself took place in front of the university-appointed Group Advisory Panel. This is a nine-person body, consisting of three students, three faculty members and three administrators, whose primary purpose is to recommend an appropriate punishment to Harold Holmes, the vice president and dean of student services.

At the end of our hearing the panel made the decision that a year of social probation would be an acceptable outcome for the Kappa Sigma fraternity. Their report was given in full to Holmes for a final review of the case. However, to our astonishment, Holmes proceeded to completely disregard the panel's decision, rendering his own, which consisted of a three-year suspension for the fraternity. How could Holmes begin to account for this sort of discrepancy?

Logically, I cannot understand how, when presented with the same relevant information, one individual could possibly make a more informed decision than a group of nine people whose sole purpose it is to rule on such cases. From this example, it would seem as though the administration had completely undermined its own established system of justice.

It is truly unfortunate that those representative committees, which are established on the principles of fairness and integrity, have proven powerless against the influence of a few select administrators. These hypocrites, who advertise the democratic process for the purpose of public reputation, yet forsake it in favor of their administrative agenda, are an embarrassment to the institution and everything that it represents.

As it was, the damage had been done, and the opportunity for an appeal was strictly a formality. I attended the aforementioned appeal hearing as a representative of the Kappa Sigma fraternity, knowing all too well that this was a battle that our fraternity was set up to lose. I did not expect much leniency on the part of the appeal committee. The hearing itself proved to be a deplorable experience in which myself and the other fraternity representatives were continually shown disrespect by administrative attitudes of disdain and condescension.

Throughout the entire appeal process, references to the honor code were used to challenge the integrity of our testimony. However, it should be questioned whether the testimony of the sole student witness

for the administration could have withstood the same scrutiny. It presented quite a quandary that the principal witness against Kappa Sigma carried with him a very dubious disciplinary record highlighted with an honor code violation for lying. While at the same time, our witness, who did not corroborate the prosecuting position, was a sophomore representative on the honor council.

Should honesty and integrity not be of primary consideration when sorting through such testimonial discrepancies? I strongly believe that the suspect character of the university's witness, in addition to the alarming number of inconsistencies in his testimony, should have discredited his very presence at the appeal.

It was absolutely incredible how hastily the administration proved itself willing to accept one disreputable witness' testimony as gospel. Specifically, I can recall one top university official actually turning his back to the entire proceedings at the time when an eyewitness was systematically exposing the many incongruities and untruths contained in testimony for the administration. Ordinarily, I would have been appalled at such behavior from a member of what was presumed to be an unbiased jury. However, I was not the least bit surprised, because this was exactly the type of prejudicial treatment that our fraternity had encountered throughout the entire ordeal.

Unlike the fundamental principle of American justice, the university presumes guilt on all charges until such occasion when you might prove yourself to be innocent. In the face of such a biased jury,

however, proving your own innocence can be a futile effort regardless of actual guilt or innocence. As a fraternity we never pretended to be innocent on all charges levied against us. However, Kappa Sigma did expect to be granted a fair trial during which we might be allowed to adequately represent our position. The general lack of consideration given to our testimony was not only disrespectful to us as individuals, but, in addition, this culpable behavior became an impediment to the entire judicial procedure.

I would be remiss to assert that Kappa Sigma was exempt from any wrongdoing. However, as a fraternity we cooperated with university officials throughout the investigation by admitting our guilt and accepting responsibility for the resulting consequences. My writing is not intended in any way to justify our actions as a fraternity but rather to inform the community as to the reprehensible manner in which our case was handled by the administration.

The punishment given to Kappa Sigma was not rehabilitative. Instead, it was a destructive and preconceived death sentence, designed to remain in place until all active members graduate from the university. To me, it seems exceedingly hypocritical that a learning institution such as this university would be unwilling to afford my fraternity any opportunity to correct its own mistakes. How could one possibly learn anything but contempt from such an experience?

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Klu Klux Klan rally showed ignorance

The confederate flag is now a symbol of hate, not heritage.

This week our nation, at least some of us, observed Martin Luther King Jr. Day. My neighbors down the hall worked feverishly during the weekend in preparation for a speech about

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King. Drafts of their speech piled in the hallway. Further down the hall and stairs another of my neighbors recounted how his professor viewed Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

The professor noted that the university doesn't have a holiday for the day Christ was born, yet we have Martin Luther King Jr. day off. I don't understand this complaint, but it seems there is a touch of racial resentment in the comment.

I didn't write a speech, or hear one, but for my observance of Martin Luther King Day I reflected on my experience at a Ku Klux Klan rally in November at the courthouse in downtown Winston-Salem.

I was among about 30 students from the university who attended the rally. With camera in hand, I went as a spectator, not a participant or protester. So I remained very observant of the people around me and their reactions to the speakers or screamers.

My reaction consisted of three components: frustration, amusement and puzzlement. Immediately upon arrival I was frustrated with the 50 Klan members spewing forth unintelligible garbage from their mouths.

The Grand Wizard of the Dark Duke of the Moon III (I'm sure his title was close to this, but you can substitute any planetary body) is dressed in a hooded black outfit with red and black striped sleeves. He explains to me how he is tired of all the people different from him, and how he is tired of white people like me who "associate with the scum of the earth."

He frustrates me because I expected arguments supporting white supremacy. Such arguments, however much in error, would show at least some level of sophistication on the Klan's part. What was I thinking? Is there such a thing as sophisticated hatred?

If there is, I never heard it at the Klan rally. My frustration slowly turned to amusement as Klansmen and -women spontaneously yelled, "White power! White power!" Crowd members answered with calls for black power, gay power and love power (things like, "It's all about love, man.").

Don't think I enjoy seeing a hate group stir things up. Remember that I said I was amused. I was amused when the Grand Wizard title guy asked the crowd, "Do you know what the definition of ignorance is?" And the crowd responded with fingers pointing at the Klans-people, "You!"

He should have known better. Then the Grand Wizard robed guy delivered a somewhat coherent speech about black being evil. I, like others, started laughing at the man, who is dressed in black. Over half the Klanspeople were dressed in black. I swear that some of the Klanspeople were laughing at themselves.

The Grand Duke Mars guy responded several minutes later by asking the question, "Do you know why we are dressed in black? So that you niggers won't see us when we come out to get you in the middle of the night!"

He didn't get any laughs with that comment. And I suppose that if there was a point at which our gathering could have turned violent, it was then. No one was hurt. I was no longer amused, but deeply troubled, or perhaps puzzled. I was puzzled when the Klans-people unfurled a confederate flag with the words "Heritage Not Hate" scrawled across it. I did not hear a single word of heritage in any of these people's words. Would it help them if I had yelled out, "Hey, your hate speech to heritage talk ratio is way off, Big Duke Knight guy."

There are many arguments out there for fair use of the confederate flag as a symbol of Southern heritage.

For me, the flag's meaning is permanently one of hate because of the Klanspeople. When I see this flag flying over a dumping business in rural east North Carolina (a.k.a. "down east"), I see a business owner who is proud to be white and hateful.

On campus, when I see this flag in part of an organization's display, or on the wall of a student's room, I see a symbol of hatred.

I can't help it, but the confederate flag isn't about Southern heritage anymore (at least not in a positive sense).

I just cannot share a symbol with the Grand Wizard Duke of the Knights of White Men with Checkered Tablecloths.

What ever happened to service with a smile?

Rudeness and inferior work characterize campus workers.

My mom has complained in recent years about the deterioration of service in the world. She also claims that "we kids" could never understand how it used to be. I never used to agree with her, and I would defend the current state of our world as being more

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efficient, but now I join her side in the fight. My disgruntled story relates to the little old community of this university.

Even though I have only been a student here for four years, I have seen the services at this school seriously deteriorate. It did not hit me in the face until this past December. The day before leaving for home for winter break, I simply stopped by the post office to forward my mail home as I have done the past three years. Well, this time I was shocked to find out that the post office no longer offers this convenience.

I tried to explain to them that it was important for them to forward my mail because I am in the process of applying for jobs, and a timely response to requests is important. The woman behind the counter replied, "No one can get their mail forwarded unless you are graduating, and so you are all in the same boat."

This statement neglected the fact that I am

competing for jobs with people from other schools, and perhaps my delayed response could give those students at other schools an advantage. There was no way I could contact every institution where I had inquired about employment and let them know of this change, and so I stood at a disadvantage.

This failure to forward mail is not my only problem with the post office. They also voluntarily withheld my *Wall Street Journal* the last week of school because, they admitted to me, they thought that students amid final exams "would not have time to read it." This is a subscription I pay for and expect to receive, but I guess they did not consider this right.

My experiences have not been isolated incidents. Other students have bills sent here or have been applying to graduate schools. A friend of mine had a similar problem — she was concerned with the medical schools to which she had applied.

After finding out that she could not forward her mail home from the university, she called all of the schools she applied to and let them know to send her mail home. It's lucky she did so, because over winter break she received an invitation for an interview at one of her prospective schools with a deadline of Jan. 2. If she had not notified these schools, she would not have had the opportunity to pursue acceptance to an ideal medical school.

Finally, another friend of mine received four different birthday cards through the campus post office in December that had all been opened and retaped closed.

I pursued my cause and went to the dean. They referred me to the woman in charge of the post office. I called numerous times, and

she never called me back. I never got my mail forwarded. This experience of the neglect of common courtesy — and even necessity — reminded me of my mother's complaint.

This problem did not end when I returned to school from break, because I had a mailbox full of requests from companies I was interested in for additional information. I will never know the effect of my tardy responses.

And as I thought of this deterioration of services over just my four years here, I began to realize that the problem does not just revolve around the the post office. This is also the case with the ARAMARK workers, the registrar and even the business school.

The controller's office is also certainly lacking service skills, but unfortunately this problem has persisted for many years, since at least my freshman year. Personally, I currently have a problem with the controller's officer because the Deacon Dining Dollars that I sent with my tuition payment are mysteriously missing.

I have also had problems with a Sundry Shop worker who, upon finding out I did not have my meal card, assured me that she could just charge it to the next person. Luckily for him, I remembered that I had money, so I paid with it in cash.

And over the years I have witnessed that workers in general are not as friendly as they once were and have become increasingly rude. Someone in the registrar's office once yelled at me for asking a simple question.

In conclusion, I must say that I do enjoy my experiences at the university, but I am just worried that the community I used to love is now deteriorating.