

OPINION

This column represents the views of the Old Gold and Black Editorial Board.

Employee attendance policy needs revision

Pro *humanitate*. The university takes every opportunity to proclaim its motto with pride. Yet it often seems that, in practice, this same university takes every opportunity to take action that contradicts this motto.

Over Christmas break, while students were safe at home, Winston-Salem had some bad weather, causing many area businesses and schools to close early or open late. Including this university. On Dec. 29, the university opened late, and all but "essential employees" got to sleep in. These "essential employees" (which include all Facilities Management employees) had to report to work at the usual early hour.

One housekeeper received permission from her supervisor to leave work at 9:30 a.m. so that she could pick up her daughter from the preschool that had announced its early closing.

Three weeks later, this employee received a letter saying that she had violated university policy as an "essential employee" in leaving work early, a violation that was "subject to reprimand and possibly termination." The letter was also put in her personnel file.

Though the letter was later removed from her file after Facilities Management realized the unfairness of their actions, the incident prompted a Facilities Management meeting designed to "clarify and ensure that all supervisors had a clear-cut understanding of the Inclement Weather Policy."

One of the key points covered in the meeting was that essential employees can miss work for "emergencies" only. "Employees should make arrangements IN ADVANCE (their capitals) for situations such as day cares that close early, transportation to and from work, bus schedules that change, etc. These situations will not be considered emergencies," they say.

Any employee who fails to follow this policy will "not be paid, will be in violation of the policy and may be suspended or terminated."

Facilities Management is in essence slapping their employees in the face with a complete lack of understanding and respect.

The university (which is ultimately responsible for the policy above Facilities Management) pays most of their essential employees minimally. Yet they look those same people in the face and

tell them that they must come to work even if public transportation is not running and even if day care centers suddenly shut down.

It seems Bill Sides, the director of Facilities Management, expects his housekeepers and maintenance workers to take the vast fortunes that they make from the university and buy big, four-wheel drive sport utility vehicles to ensure that they make it to work, rain or shine, sun or ice and snow.

Better yet, Facilities Management employees should be *psychic*. That way, they would foresee the blizzard that paralyzes this unprepared Southern city

in plenty of time to make arrangements IN ADVANCE to cover their work responsibilities. That way, no silly little storm, no sudden drop in temperatures will catch them off guard, causing them to miss work for anything as trivial as their children or their safety.

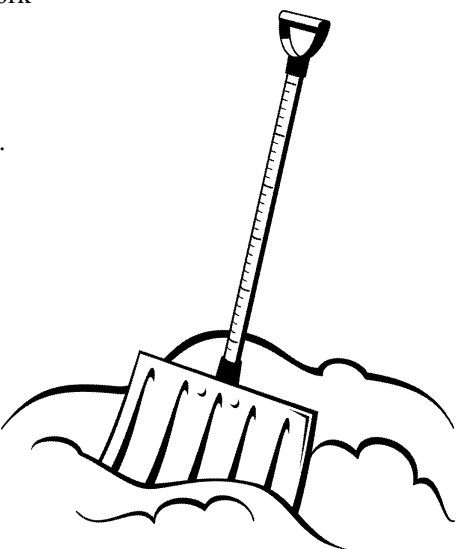
Even pushing the moral issues aside, the stringent policy of Facilities Man-

agement is even stretching practicality. Sure, it's probably a good idea for the snowblowers to show up for work when it snows, but why do housekeepers need to be on campus on a day like Dec. 29, a day that students were not even in town, faculty members were catching up on their soap operas, and the only people who would be on campus were those two or three people who thought it was worth it to put chains on their tires and drive to the Z. Smith Reynolds Library to check out the rare books collection?

Do those two or three people really care if the dust in the corner of the fourth floor of the Wilson Wing gets swept, or if the trash can behind the reference desk gets emptied?

Perhaps Facilities Management should stop giving their employees a hard time about the definition of an emergency in the heart of a snowstorm, and start working on improving their work quality when students, faculty and community members are actually here to use the campus.

If the university is so concerned that its essential employees show up for work in the middle of a snowstorm, then it has the responsibility to provide day care and transportation for its employees. The university should really provide day care anyway for all employees, including faculty and administration.



Courtesy of the USBIC Educational Foundation

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Huffman provides alternative residence

I would like to thank the staff of the *Old Gold and Black* for their vote of confidence in Huffman House in the Jan. 22 staff editorial "Polo Hall Occupancy Raises Some Questions."

Huffman has long tried to create a supportive community for all of its residents, whatever extracurricular activities (independent or Greek) with which they may be involved.

It seems to me that the trustees and administration, whether their methods are appropriate or not, agree with a number of students that residence life at the university does not usually create that supportive and stimulating environment.

It is my sincerest hope that there will be no need for a Huffman or Polo Hall to provide that community life, but Huffman will be here in the meantime.

Andrew Frey
Senior
Huffman House President

Senior class campaign gets one less donation

I often wonder why the student body seems so cynical towards the administration. After all, we are getting a great education from an excellent faculty at a small school with a great reputation. I was never really sure how my own cynicism developed — until the first person asked me to donate to the senior class campaign. Then I realized that, like everything else, a great deal of bitterness grows from monetary issues.

It seems as though this university never misses an opportunity to rip us off. I started thinking about just how much I've been forced to donate to my own "personal" senior class campaign. Let's see ... there are the infamous parking tickets. I would say that in the two years I've had a car here, I've paid about eight tickets. I admit that I deserved six of them, but the other two, for reasons too tedious to get into, were ridiculous. So, there's \$40 so far.

I have never done any significant damage to the four rooms I've lived in. Yet, somehow this university has managed to make off with about \$50 in room fines. Wait, what am I complaining about? I'm sure those small scratches on our door, which I no doubt went out and carved just for goofs, cost at least fifty dollars to never repair.

Why get into the rest when you all know how hard-working those room inspectors are? So I'm up to \$90 now.

My next "donation" was what prompted this article. I can not even begin to imagine why I was charged \$4 a copy for my transcripts.

I guess 20 grand doesn't quite cover the cost of fishing up my records in the computer, printing them, sticking them in an envelope and stamping them. Instead, when I'm done applying to grad schools I will have given Wake Forest a final \$20 for good luck.

Before I wrote this I was wondering whether it was really worth it for the university to keep ripping us off like this. How many bitter students won't give the \$50 they might have given to the senior class campaign or the alumni telethon next year because they are so bitter about all the money they've "donated" so far?

But we all know this issue was, most likely, researched by the university's accountants in a careful cost-benefit analysis. And obviously they know what they're doing — I probably would have donated \$50 this year, but instead they made out with \$110 from me. So, I expect an invitation to President Thomas K. Hearn Jr.'s little lunch next year at Homecoming.

Matt Porio
Senior

Columnist was unfair to great postal workers

I am writing this letter in response to Joe Parkhill's Jan. 22 column in the *OG&B*, "Whatever Happened to Service with a Smile?" I feel obliged to reply because frankly, Joe, when you talk trash about the women at the post office, you may as well be talking trash about my sister.

You see, ever since I arrived on campus four years ago, the ladies at Reynolda Station have been my friends. Granted, the first time I handed Tommi an orange package slip I did smile and wish her a nice day, but that is all it took for me to feel welcome in what has become my campus safe haven.

I go to the post office at least once a day, and talking to the women there has become something that I look forward to as part of my daily routine. They have tried to set me up with female mailbox goers, they are interested in my academic career and they are always welcome to any cookies that I receive. The post office is more important to me than most things at the university.

I, too, was in the process of hearing from graduate schools over Christmas, and was initially disturbed that mail was not being forwarded home. But c'mon, Joe, do you really think that this change was implemented as a result of meddling post office employees? Clearly, the change was wrought by upper-echelon bureaucrats. It is those villains that you should persecute.

I was intrigued by your allusion to your friend's opened and re-taped birthday cards. I can picture it now; the post office workers sitting around a smoke-filled back room opening random pieces of mail for their personal enjoyment.

You make an abrupt transition from your assault on the post office to a general condemnation of ARAMARK workers. This brief segment of your article also offended me, because I happen to really like many of the people who work in our dining facilities.

When I enter the Pit I see familiar, friendly faces and accommodating people. In fact, I see many people that I have established personal relationships with in my university tenure.

Before I conclude I would just like to say that I think that you are a good guy, Joe, and I generally appreciate your ideas and commentary. However, in this instance I feel that your article was unfounded and uncharacteristic. I cannot attempt to address all of your criticisms in this letter. There are simply too many.

However, I can speak to the premise of your article. You may want to reevaluate your thesis and come to grips with the fact that if you want service with a smile, you must learn to respect and appreciate those people that provide it. Do yourself a favor, Joe, and get to know the people at the post office and the Pit. They are not only helpful and friendly, but are the backbone of this institution.

Scott Mayne
Senior

For more letters, see next page.

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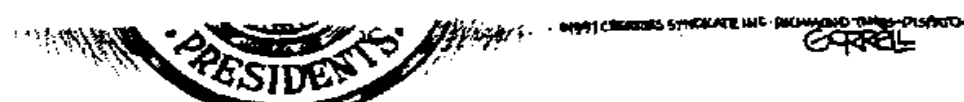
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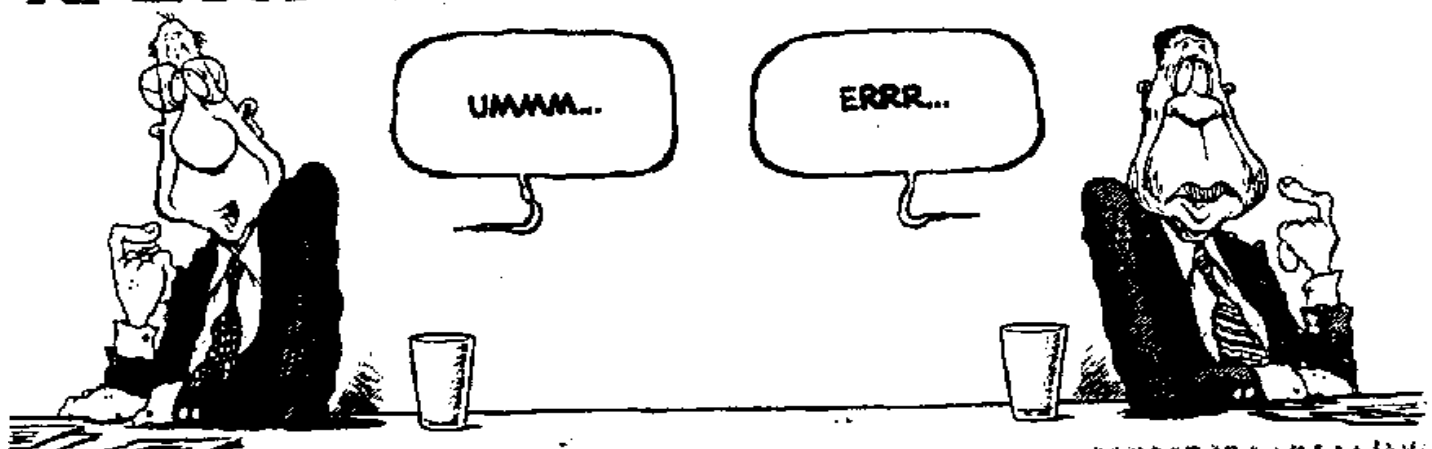
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NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON RACE



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