

Administration cares only about image

Future plans are purely superficial.

Attending this school nowadays reminds me a lot of junior high school.

Yes, I know it seems like centuries ago, but for most seventh- and eighth-grade students throughout the country, the junior high experience revolved around the same basic thing: image.

Paul Gaeta

EDITORIALS EDITOR

You see, that really was what junior high was all about. Other kids didn't care who you were. Students weren't interested in what your beliefs were. And other youths hardly gave a hoot about your morals and values.

What was on your inside was an extraneous matter. The "cool" kids were the guys and gals who wore the trendy clothes. And the "cool" kids were those who got the hotty boyfriends and girlfriends just because they sported the in haircut and had skin that didn't contain monstrous craters with penny-sized whiteheads.

They were the ones who sat at the popular tables during lunchtime. And they

were the ones invited to the notorious boy/girl parties on weekends.

Funny part is, a lot of these "cool" kids whose lives revolved solely around image are the same people I now see dropping out of school and working at the local gas station down the road.

It's clear that image gets you only so far. Unfortunately, the administration of this university has recently resorted to these junior-high-like tactics. Image at this school is not just a factor but *the* factor in how it operates. And the result is a university slowly flushing itself down the tubes.

Over the past two years, I have looked at the policies and plans this school continues to implement. Within them, I see an institution trying hard to please everyone outside its gates but doing little to satisfy the wants and needs of the people within, such as students and faculty.

To the administration of this school, image is everything.

If you don't believe me, then just open your eyes to what goes on around this place. On the south Quad of this campus, yet another building is being constructed. That's millions and millions of dollars going to a relatively unneeded facility but one that looks and sounds nice to all those prospective students we see touring around school this spring.

Meanwhile, the administration argues that it doesn't have enough money to increase the salaries of our professors, the very men and women who teach us the knowledge we will need in this world.

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This week, the administration finally put forth its new rules and regulations on off-campus housing. All year long, World War III has been fought between the University Area Homeowners Association and off-campus students.

On the one hand are the Winston-Salem citizens who argue that student parties are too loud and offensive. Undergraduates, however, argue that they have the right to live wherever they want. If you haven't had a chance to check out this university's new off-campus policies, do so because when you see them, you will realize how incredibly vague and potentially harsh these regulations are.

The rules state that Residence Life and Housing will read each "application" for off-campus housing and determine whether that respective person can live there. On the exterior that might sound all right. But if I had a million dollars, I would bet it on the contrary. In future years, these vague policies will allow the

administration to handpick those undergraduates they deem fit for living in houses. And the truth is, the students this school deems fit will be a small, small minority.

And what kind of institution has the right to choose which student can and cannot live in single-family residences off-campus anyway. Don't give me that "Oh, Wake Forest is a private university so they can do whatever they want" crap. We are adults, and if this school can't hold a sense of responsibility within us, then we should change the name of this school from Wake Forest University to Wake Forest Toddler Center.

Yes, several students at this university have messed up in the past and thrown wild parties that would cause any neighbor to get angry.

Biology professor Peter Weigl, who chaired the Student Life Committee that developed this new policy said, "Most of our students living off-campus are good neighbors" but this policy will be implemented because of "some of the more extreme situations."

It's hard for me to understand why all undergraduates currently living or planning to live off-campus should be penalized for the actions of a small number of students.

It's a weak way of dealing with it; if this university were truly bold, it would regulate what was going on at this small number of houses instead of making an example of our student body as a whole.

But again, the decision all came down to image. The administration felt a little

pressure from the homeowners and immediately flinched. And now instead of doing what's best for its own students, it comes up with regulations that just punish them while making all those homeowners happy as can be.

Image. Image. Image. That's what life on this campus is all about, and to be honest, it makes me laugh. This place is not a university, but rather, it's becoming a prison.

And although we might not be able to detect it now, in the years to come, not many high school seniors will want to attend a college that lacks freedom, fun and overall happiness.

In closing, I sometimes think to myself how happy I would be if I could sit in President Thomas K. Hearn's office in early fall.

I'd sit on his couch with a nice bag of popcorn and watch our commander-in-chief open the new issue of *U.S. News and World Report* that discusses its new college rankings. For the more this university implements plans and policies such as the Plan for the Class of 2000 (which failed to meet its faculty quota), the further down the rankings we fall.

To me, that's a clear indicator of how the right moves in the eyes of our administration are the wrong moves for this university as a whole.

If our administration truly wants to make the university a better institution, then they should take a page out of the junior high handbook, because image folks, isn't anything.

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Judicial system changes fail to fulfill promise

Administrators who fail to cooperate should resign.

Last year, the student body overwhelmingly approved a series of changes in the judicial system. Those great judicial reforms of 1998 were the first step in what was promised to be a new policy of cooperation between students, faculty and administration. *This was the great promise of 1998.*

Jacob Kline

GUEST COLUMNIST

For that promise, I would forgive every gate house and party regulation imposed by the administration, but it is a promise that has not been kept. In the last week, two new policies have come forth that should renew every student's cynicism about any future cooperation with administration. April 20, the office of Residence Life and Housing produced a new policy for off-campus housing invented without any student involvement and only entertained a single letter of student recommendations which were not adopted. April 16, a letter from the chairman of the administrative Judicial Council to Student Government explained that the judicial system was "out of compliance" with administrative guidelines and that it must be changed. In part, those changes removed student cooperation and a clean record from a list of factors that might lessen one's punishment for judicial violations. These changes were made without any consultation with students or with SG.

We have kept our part of the "Great Promise of 1998" by agreeing to judicial reform and working tirelessly to promote reasonable solutions to campus problems. We have made ourselves fully available to participate in creating new university policies. However, various members of the administration have refused to honor this agreement of cooperation, and because of this "noncompliance," they must resign.

The chairman of the Judicial Council and the nameless administrator who directed the creation of the new off-campus policy have violated the trust and spirit of cooperation that have grown between this university's students and its administration. Administrators must realize that the student body will not accept policies that are unilaterally imposed upon it.

We came to this university to learn how to participate in a democratic society; we came here to find our ideals, to learn how to work proactively to find solutions to the larger problems of the world. What is the greater message when the administration tells us that our opinions are invalid and that we lack the intelligence to work with them in directing those policies that affect us? Those administrators and faculty who refuse to cooperate with students in deciding university policy do not have a place at this progressive institution, a university that teaches its students how to live as citizens.

I ask that those administrators and faculty who believe in the eternal irrelevance of student opinion step down from all policy-making positions, to be replaced by persons who can tolerate the cooperation of the student body.

A worthwhile life is filled with devotion

Dedication to a cause sparks miracles.

When we think of the word "devotion," what images come immediately to mind? Is it something that we associate simply to the act of praying or private worship? Or is it something which we dedicate our lives and energies to in the form of a cause, enterprise or activity? Is it something sacred that is shared between two

our lives and work at the university.

I found the word devotion used within this context as "the fact or state of being ardently dedicated and loyal (as to an idea or person); to set apart for a special and often higher end," according to Webster's Dictionary. This then prompted me to reflect on yet another poignant encounter I had last week with a group of 35 students who we invited to a special program hosted by Student Government and the Benson University Center. This is just the beginning, as we'll be doing part two on this in the fall, inviting more students and faculty to join us in these discussions.

As I observed and participated in the group's dialogue on race relations, what I became aware of was the mindful way in which every member of the group extended themselves to one another by listening, redirecting, clarifying, and honoring each other's experience. To me, there emerged a compassionate and devotional presence within the group. Also, by the end of the program, what became clearly evident to me within this group was their ability to powerfully capture

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What began as a two-hour program evolved into three hours of a very full-bodied devotional dialogue. The upside of devotional activities such as these would ideally be for us all to find a safe place and space within the context of our lives and work at the university wherein we can create meaningful opportunities to come together and engage in higher-end discussions. It certainly seems clear

to me that somewhere along the line we all made a choice to dedicate a portion of our lives to be here now, whether that be as a student, faculty, staff or administrator. And if we so ardently dedicate our efforts to make the most out of our education and work at the university perhaps we can find that common ground to share our passions and our concerns with each other without discounting viewpoints or perspectives which are different than ours.

So the next time you hear the word devotion you may want to consider and reflect on what that means to you and how you exercise it within your everyday life and practices within the university. Thus, let me close by sharing with you these sets of devotional insights (taken from a Hallmark card given to me by one of my students): follow goodness, share kindness, ignore ignorance, encourage laughter, discover miracles. As we enter into this time of commencement (new beginnings), I do hope that we will all find a way to devote ourselves to a cause we care about because if we don't, who will?

Joanna Iwata

COLUMNIST

people or more? Or is it solitary in nature?

I just recently had lunch with a good friend of mine, wherein this notion of devotion became a sidebar topic of our lunch discussion. And the more we talked about it, the more I became intrigued by the use of the word devotion and its applications within