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University falls short of desires

Student finds the university resembles country club life.

Wake Forest University, nestled peacefully behind protective gates, with sprawling green lawns and stately brick buildings, has an atmosphere

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of harmony and stability.

Its size, location and general characteristics of the student body make the school seem like the type of environment in which one can be comfortable and feel secure.

I have been here only one month, and so far, the school has lived up to my expectations.

However, now I am not quite sure that I should be so comfortable.

I had always envisioned the "college experience" as being one in which students finally learned how to live on their own, to take care of themselves and become individuals.

I envisioned it as a time when students cared about current events and challenged

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the political ideals of their parents' generation.

Perhaps for some students, the college life has lived up to this, or maybe that was just the college experience of the '60s.

However, from the moment I arrived here, I have felt as though I lived in a country club.

Other than having to do my own laundry, I have it easier here in many ways than I did at home.

The campus is beautiful, there is an abundance of open fields for personal recreation, a fully equipped fitness center, a staff to clean our bathrooms and hallways; we never have to make our own meals if we so desire and all classes are a short walk away.

My life here at the university wonderful. I spend my time going to classes, doing some homework, partying, hanging out with friends, working out, sunbathing, eating, and sleeping.

So what is so wrong with this kind of pampered lifestyle? Nothing really except that I feel disconnected and isolated from the rest of the world.

There are a plethora of ways to connect oneself to the world and to be aware of everything that occurs outside of these protective walls.

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We rarely discuss national and world events in any of my classes, and I find that I must go out of my way to learn of current affairs.

In addition to this, the diversity of this school is virtually nonexistent. So many university students have come from similar backgrounds, dress the same and are interested in similar things.

This also makes it easy on the average student, for we never need to learn to live with others who are really different from us.

Indeed we have a good life here. The most difficult part of our college existence is managing time between studying for classes, partying on weekends eating and sleeping.

However, what happens when we all leave this protective, gated university environment and truly have to enter the real world?

Sure the university will prepare us academically, but will we really be able to take care of ourselves?

Will we be able to interact with others, or respect a boss or fellow employee, who is totally different from us?

Most importantly, will we realize that that we are never again going to be pampered?

Neighborhood demands students' respect

A community feels student neighbors need to change their attitudes.

When I was invited to write this guest column several weeks ago, I accepted, as I had quite a bit to say about the university off-campus "party houses," both on behalf of my husband and myself as long time residents of

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Rosedale Circle and as the President of the newly formed University Area Homeowners Association.

I did not realize that I would be provided, by later editorials and articles, much more material for response. So I am doubly grateful and truly appreciate the opportunity. This is written in good faith, with the hope that it will be read and accepted the same way, to the end that this very serious problem can be resolved reasonably, fairly and swiftly, with beneficial results to all parties.

It seems that those who wrote these editorials have unwittingly put their collective fingers on one of the main ingredients for this unfortunate state of affairs — arrogance.

Add to this immaturity (one of the editors thinks the legal drinking age of 18 should be reinstated, while it appears that even 21-year-olds are not able to drink responsibly); thoroughly soak with alcohol; season well with a good deal of contempt, particularly for elders and authority; and you have the formula for our present experience.

Are we "peevd and frustrated?" Absolutely. We are far more — we are angry. But the overriding emotions we feel are sadness and alarm: sadness that these young people apparently have no self-respect, no feelings of remorse for the way they are debasing themselves or of shame for the dishonor they are bringing upon the university and their fellow students by their outrageous

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conduct; and alarm that this whole situation is a catastrophe waiting to happen.

We are very concerned that at some point a long-suffering citizen may just decide to take matters into his/her own hands (we read about these tragedies in the papers all too often) or that drunken students walking in the roadway may be run over, possibly by other drunken students who are driving.

There are other scenarios too numerous to mention here, but the point is that there are many of us who are not just concerned about the damaging effect on our homes and lives but on the lives of these young people as well.

We are told that a very high percentage of incoming freshmen are already binge drinkers. It appears that the sole mission of some of these students is to party to excess and that nothing is going to stop them. Indeed, they seem amazed that others should think they have any right to stop them. Is this the primary goal in their lives? Does the tragic fact that this is a nation-wide problem justify their actions and make them more acceptable?

And, contrary to references in the aforementioned editorials, flagrant abuses of the law are occurring. This does result in frequent citations and arrests, even though police officers do make every effort to give adequate warnings and even though neighbors have been reluctant to call until the situation becomes intolerable.

Perhaps the students do not realize

that a court record is permanent and can have long-term consequences, one of which is difficulty in obtaining a job, no matter how well-educated or qualified one is.

Those who own student houses certainly have a responsibility for keeping both dwellings and dwellers in order. And the university (though inexplicably referred to as "an uninvolved party") apparently is seeking to enforce its own rules regarding off-campus residents, to implement new ones and to bear down on the students by reprimanding a "ridiculously high" number of them, with heavier involvement from University Police and more hearings.

And the Winston-Salem police had no need to be "alarmed" by the campus police to increase their surveillance and citations; for years they have been trying nobly and diligently to control this deplorable situation. They acknowledge that it has escalated rapidly and consequently utilized tactical units and extra patrolmen over the past several weekends.

We all know that there are many other incidents of law-breaking to which the police officers must respond. As to their "wasting time targeting college students," certainly prevention is always preferable to damage control or cure. We have been informed that the officers' efforts are often frustrating and that they welcome our input and assistance in hopes that this particular problem can be put to rest ultimately and finally. Then they can, indeed, spend their time elsewhere dealing with other situations which are not brought about by selfish, self-absorbed hedonists who feel that they should be "allowed to socialize in peace."

Young people that perceive themselves as mature enough to live off-campus in a neighborhood environment should be able to monitor themselves and their guests adequately and should be quite capable of sensitivity to others' living habits and of knowing when they are too loud and annoying.

We have been advised not to confront students who are in the midst of partying, but it really should not be necessary for neighbors to do so or for law-enforcement officers to intervene.