

Anti-Islam editorial in Wayne State University paper criticized

by Niraj Warikoo
Knight Ridder Newspapers

An editorial headlined "Islam Sucks" that ran in a student newspaper has drawn fire from an Arab-American group.

The piece, published Tuesday in the daily campus newspaper of Wayne State University in Detroit and written by a student, says Islam "presents a danger to the welfare of many due to its influence."

Written by Joe Fisher, who was not available for comment Wednesday, the editorial also says, "Islam subjugates hundreds of millions of women, sexual minorities and other religions where it's the law of the land."

After reading the editorial, Imad Hamad, regional director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, said, "It is absolutely appalling that such ignorance, accompanied by numerous inaccuracies, would find its place in a newspaper distributed by a highly respected academic institution."

Hamad said he was concerned that such an editorial might lead to hate crimes against Muslim

students, or those who appear to be. "If we allow such messages of hatred to be published and spread, you truly wonder what's next," he said.

The editor of the South End, Jason Clancy, said he's had a few complaints, but doesn't regret running the editorial.

"As a student newspaper, we welcome anything from students, faculty or staff," he said. "We welcome their ideas, but it doesn't necessarily mean they represent the newspaper."

The university's vice president for student development and campus life, Charles Brown, said Wednesday that "we're very saddened that this article was written by one of our students."

"We don't condone this," But, Brown added, students have the right to free speech.

Brown said he has spoken to Clancy about the editorial and plans to speak with the staff of the student-run newspaper, along with Muslim students.

"This is a teachable moment for us," Brown said.

Most homeschooled students test well; skills easily transfer to college

by Peggy Walsh-Sarnecki
Knight Ridder Newspapers

Thomas Burke scored well above the national average on his SAT and ACT college admissions tests.

Not bad for a kid who didn't go to high school.

The Hillsdale College economics major from Oxford, Mich., got a 27 on the ACT and a 1230 on the SAT. The national average on the ACT is 21, and the SAT is 1020. The highest possible on the ACT is 36; it's 1600 on the SAT.

"I'd done the Iowa standardized testing, and I'd always tested well ahead," said Burke, 20. "I'd also taken junior college classes since I was 16 and did well in those."

Overall, homeschooled students average 22.7 on the ACT and 1093 on the SAT.

The National Home School Legal Defense Fund found that 69 percent of homeschoolers go on to college or other post-secondary education. In 1998, about 200,000 of the 14.5 million undergraduate students in the United States had been homeschooled.

Even so, colleges have struggled to find fair methods for ranking these students in their admissions procedures. Admissions officers have been reluctant to place much credence in grade point averages administered by parents.

Wayne State University in Detroit has a relatively simple admissions criteria — 21 on the ACT and a 2.5 grade point average. But officials felt the need to raise the bar for homeschoolers, to a 2.75 GPA.

"They're still unique enough that I think most colleges and universities are still grappling with how best to handle them," said Mike Wood, interim director of admissions.

"It's very rare to see a homeschooled student who doesn't have a good grade point average, and that's why we require the test score as well as the grade point."

The University of Michigan receives very few homeschooled applicants, about a dozen out of the 24,000 applicants per year. U-M, the state's most selective university, requires homeschooled students to take the subject-specific SAT II tests in five areas — English, math, history, social and natural sciences — in addi-

tion to the general SAT or ACT.

"Generally, we find they're very well-prepared, and they tend to be highly motivated," said U-M spokeswoman Julie Petersen.

Hillsdale College has a high percentage of homeschooled students compared with many other colleges and universities: About 10 percent of Hillsdale's 1,160 students were homeschooled.

These are the students who don't wait until the last minute to start their term papers, said James Taylor, chairman of the Department of Education at Hillsdale College.

"I see a kind of self-discipline — a kind of take-matters-into-their-own-hands," Taylor said. "And I do think it's a result of having to do a lot of independent study in the homeschool environment." Many of the homeschooled students want to be teachers, Taylor said.

One flaw is that homeschooled students are often not well-rounded, said David Stewart, director of Hillsdale's honors program.

"I can generally count on them for having almost no science and virtually no lab science," Stewart said. "They've typically done a lot more in English and history than other students come in with. They tend to be better writers."

Burke said that after the intensiveness of studying at home, initially college wasn't all that great. But the harder courses now hold his interest.

"Having to sit through classes, that was a bit different," Burke said. "For the most part it was rather boring, to be completely honest. When I was at home, a lot of things were self-taught. I was always doing work. My mom didn't sit down and lecture me."



KRT PHOTOGRAPH BY GABRIEL B. TAIT/DETROIT FREE PRESS

Former homeschooled Thomas Burke, 20, studies calculus at his fraternity house near Hillsdale College. Burke, a sophomore, said that after intensive studying at home, college courses initially didn't hold his interest.

Coaster promises to detect party drugs



PHOTO BY BOB EIGHMI/MIAMI HERALD

Francisco Guerra, president of Drink Safe Technologies, has developed a coaster that can detect the presence of date-rape drugs in alcoholic beverages.

by Patrick Danner
Knight Ridder Newspapers

Francisco J. Guerra is a magician-turned-inventor who says theme parks like Walt Disney World use a machine he created to make "evaporative snow." Dentist Brian Glover says his bubble-making device was used on pop star Britney Spears' recent tour.

Now, the pair have teamed on something less frivolous but with potentially far-reaching consequences: a drink coaster that can detect date-rape drugs in alcoholic beverages.

"Just having a product like this is a deterrent," says Glover, a Long Island dentist and a principal in Davie, Fla.-based Drink Safe Technologies. "Perhaps people will think twice before committing a hideous crime as this."

The pair say they have applied for a patent for their technology, which allows a drop of a drink to be placed on a light-colored circle on the coaster. Users are then instructed to rub gently on the circle. The color will change to a darker shade within a minute if a date-rape drug is detected, they say. Date-rape drugs include Rohypnol and GHB.

"The tests, when properly performed, do work," says James McCafferty, director of labs at Southern Research Group

in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. He says the lab, which is licensed with the Drug Enforcement Administration, has developed for Drink Safe two chemical tests that are capable of detecting "adulterated drinks."

McCafferty adds he has conducted tests on 50 popular alcoholic beverages, with five showing false-positives, meaning the test detects a drug where none is present. He declines to name those drinks. Drink Safe intends to have other drinks tested.

"It sounds very promising," says Dr. Karen Simmons, director of the Rape Treatment Center in Miami. However, she has some advice for drinkers. "I personally tell people to carry their drink with them . . . and not to drink out of a large punch bowl."

Guerra, 33, and Glover, 34, say they spent "hundreds of thousands of dollars" on developing the technology. They expect to test market the coasters within 90 days.

Guerra says they're negotiating to sell the licensing rights for the coasters to liquor manufacturers, who could put their logos on the coasters and distribute them to bars and clubs.

The cost for mass-produced coasters would be pennies each, Guerra says. They also have developed a personal test kit with strips that can also be used for testing.

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