

# NATIONAL CAMPUS NEWS

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The Behrend Beacon

## University of Virginia to weigh classes on racial sensitivity

by **Katrice Franklin Hardy**  
The Virginian-Pilot

Race discussions and history lessons about a time when blacks weren't allowed to be students at the University of Virginia could soon become a part of the institution's curriculum.

A Halloween party thrown by white fraternities at which some guests came dressed in blackface has increased concerns about racial insensitivity at the school.

Administrators will begin meeting in a few weeks to develop plans for education that many have said must occur at the university, which didn't accept blacks until 1950.

One option includes requiring students to attend training sessions on multiculturalism or diversity. Another proposal involves race discussions among incoming freshmen.

"Race instances occur in society in general," said Patricia M. Lampkin, the university's vice president for student affairs. "The benefit here is we are able to take them and really help people think through them. In regular society, you might ignore them and move on, and that doesn't help."

At the Halloween party, at least one white fraternity member came dressed as a black Uncle Sam with full, pink lips, sunglasses, an afro wig and a red, white and blue suit. Two other men dressed as black tennis champions Venus and Serena Williams with ponytail wigs. Photos of the party were circulated on the Internet.

The university's Inter-Fraternity Council Judiciary Committee held trials for the fraternities and found them not guilty Monday of disorderly conduct. The committee found them guilty of consumption of alcohol by minors.

The fraternities, Kappa Alpha and Zeta Psi, were also strongly urged by the committee to participate in diversity education and training on appropriate community conduct. The university's Office of Equal Opportunity Programs could provide such training.

University officials say it's time for incoming students to learn about U.Va.'s segregated past and how to be sensitive to students of all backgrounds. The university has a long history of racial episodes that occur often, several officials and students said.

"Sad to say, this is not an utterly isolated incident," President John T. Casteen III wrote in a letter distributed about 10 days ago in an e-mail to students and faculty and at a football game.

"Efforts to make this university an authentic cross-section of what we are as a country and progress made toward this goal are too important to be cast aside by the careless acts of a few," Casteen wrote.

About 7.5 percent, or 1,440, of the University of Virginia's nearly 19,200 students are black. About 67 percent are white.

On average, about 41 percent of students said they were satisfied with how minorities were treated on campus on an undergraduate education survey conducted in 1999. About 27 percent of the students who answered the question on the survey said they were dissatisfied.

M. Rick Turner, dean of the university's Office of African-American Affairs, said the Halloween incident was hurtful and painful. A lot of work has been done to open the university's doors to all students, he said.

Turner's office was flooded with e-mails and phone calls from parents questioning whether the university is a safe and welcoming environment for their children.

"It's bad whenever it occurs," Turner said. "But being a Southern university and being born in segregation, it brings a little more controversy to the institution."

Turner said the costumes weren't the only time this semester when black students believed that they were being ridiculed.

About 400 black students protested The Cavalier Daily, U.Va.'s student newspaper, in October after an editorial criticized a black organization called the Griot Society for fostering racial tension. Protesters said the editorial was an example of how the newspaper unfairly covers black events and issues.

Ivy Wafford Duke, a graduate of the University of Virginia's law school and undergraduate program in the 1990s, said students would get a lot from mandatory diversity sessions.

Duke learned of the Halloween costume party from other alumni. She recalled a fraternity member dressing up like an island native when she attended the school.

Duke said she felt welcome at the university, but that students socialized within their culture.

"It's sad that people still think that such behavior is humorous," said Duke, 34, legal counsel for the Calvert investment management firm in Bethesda, Md.

The instances also don't help the University of Virginia in its efforts to recruit new students, Duke said.

## One man gets a crash course in women at Pennsylvania college

by **Michael Vitez**  
Knight Ridder Newspapers

Soren Begley never had much to do with girls until he enrolled at Harcum College in Bryn Mawr, with 500 female students and just 30 males.

And became a resident adviser on a hall with 16 women.

Soren and his sweet 16.

He watches the Eagles alone. But what he has learned about women!

One: "They eat up the toilet paper." On his hall, every four women share one bathroom, and each bathroom is allotted two rolls per week. It is Soren's job to ration TP, and two rolls is not enough. "I just want to know where it all goes," he said, mystified.

Two: "I began to see very clearly the difference between a good woman and a bad woman," he said.

A good woman is sweet, understanding, fair, "kind of like a mom," Soren said. "She knows she can trust me, that I'm not a player. A bad girl has attitude, and she's a gossip."

Three: Women can be cunning. "They know how to get what they want," he said, "especially from a guy."

For instance, if a toilet or drain gets clogged, or ceiling lightbulb needs replacing, or a window gets stuck, Soren gets sweet-talked into making the repairs. Not that he minds. In fact, one woman on his floor kept asking him to fix things until he finally figured out she had a crush on him.

"He's a chick magnet," teased Shelisa Waller, 19, of Coatesville. "He just won't admit it."

Soren is good-looking and fit. He takes a class in walking. He often skips meals in the dorm cafeteria in favor of a chocolate protein drink.

Women have slipped love notes under his door. But babe magnetism is new to him.

He was a loner at William Penn High School in Philadelphia, where he graduated in 1999. After two years of living at home in West Philadelphia (where he has two little sisters), and attending community college, he enrolled at Harcum last fall. Harcum, one of the area's oldest two-year private colleges, began accepting men in the 1980s. The ratio is still 15 women for every man.

"I came here, it was like an explosion," Soren said. "Suddenly all these girls knew me."

Still, Soren says, he's been taking it slow with the ladies, especially on his hall. One girl, for instance, really liked him. Then he busted her for having candles, which is against dorm rules. "She



PHOTO BY RON CORTES/PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Soren Begley, resident advisor at Harcum College in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, finishes his desert while waiting for a dorm meeting with Stacy Fuerman, Miriam Tartack, and Emily Lutz.

thought I was her friend, that I'd watch her back," he said. "But I have responsibilities."

"My romantic life is like it's on hold," Soren said. "It's hard to explain. I think as time goes on I will ease my way into one relationship, with nobody knowing about it."

Soren is 21. He's known he wanted to work with animals ever since high school. At community college, a teacher told him about the veterinary-technician program at Harcum. He should finish in January 2004 with an associate degree.

Right now, his classes include anatomy and physiology of domestic animals, general chemistry, and surgery and radiology.

"I'm kind of struggling with anatomy and physiology," he said. "I get C grades. I have a B in surgery and radiology."

Now that he's been an RA for three months, Soren says the school work is more of a challenge than life with women.

The night I was there, Monday, the hall seemed about as rowdy as a public library. A couple of times Soren had to tell young women to turn their music down. Two of them asked his advice on redecorating their room (he told them how to arrange their furniture) - and they actually listened! Another told him how she had forgotten about her laundry for two weeks and left it in a dorm dryer. "They just threw it on a table and left it alone," she told Soren. "They didn't even steal my Gap sweats." Soren wasn't surprised that a student could forget about her laundry for two weeks.

Things don't faze him much anymore. On a re-

cent night, he said, two young women complained about how two others, with whom they share the bathroom, leave "feminine products" in the tub.

The women only wanted to vent and he was ready. "I can handle it now," he said. "I'm kind of used to it. I'm in the groove."

There is one other male RA in the Klein Dormitory, but he has a couple of guys living on his floor. All of the other RAs at Harcum are women; only women have been RAs until this year.

The female RAs, of course, think that women on Soren's floor really come to them with female-type problems, but they're glad to have Soren around, especially late at night.

"The boyfriends will step all over us," said Rebecca Wagner, another RA. "So we call him to stand behind us, to look intimidating."

As an RA, Soren receives a discount of \$1,700 on his annual housing bill, and a stipend of \$200 a month. He also gets his own room and bathroom.

"I love it," he said. "All the time I love it. The good, bad and ugly here, I love it all."

There was a knock at his door - an RA from downstairs.

"You have TP?" she asked.

"Why?" he responded with alarm. "I only have six."

"Just let me have two rolls," she pleaded.

"There's no TP downstairs?" Soren asked incredulously.

"No," she insisted.

He handed over two rolls.

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