

Prices at 'affirmative action' bake sale based on buyer's race

by Carrie Sturrock
Knight Ridder Newspapers

The Berkeley College Republicans held an "affirmative action" bake sale Wednesday on Sproul Plaza, charging customers different prices based on their race.

A white person paid \$1.50 for a chocolate chip cookie, a Mexican-American paid 74 cents and black person paid a quarter. The goal, the students said, was to highlight the inherent unfairness of using race preferences in admissions or hiring. The issue has been gaining attention on campuses nationwide as the U.S. Supreme Court prepares to consider next month the race-conscious admissions policies at the University of Michigan.

"It's a visual argument for how affirmative action works on an everyday basis," said Andrea Irvin, a member of the Berkeley College Republicans. "It shows the ridiculousness of the program."

Within minutes of setting up their display on Sproul Plaza, other students began challenging that perspective. Arguments, both heated and civil, continued for hours.

"I'm interested in your flattening out of a complicated argument," junior Patrick Conner said to students standing behind the Republican table. "I find it extremely irritating, insulting and rather naive. I suggest you study history more."

California banned affirmative action with Proposition 209 in 1996. Since then, the University of California has engaged in extensive outreach and has experienced a slight overall increase in the percentage of Hispanic and black students in the nine-campus system.

But the most highly selective campuses, such as Cal and UCLA, have seen a marked decrease.

In 1995, black students made up 6.7 percent of UC Berkeley's freshman class and Hispanics, 16.1 percent. Last year, black students accounted for 3.9 percent and Hispanics 10.9 percent.

In one exchange among students Wednesday, Kelly Coyne, of the Berkeley College Republicans, called affirmative action a Band-Aid for a problem rooted in a broken public education system that needs fixing.

"I guess my question to you is: How are we going to address our unfair society?" responded Don Hughes, a Berkeley resident. "If you go to a school where most of the students are black, you can be pretty sure that school will have less money than a school that is white."

One Berkeley student, freshman Tracy Ross, protested the Republicans display with a sign that read, "free cookies for athletes," and "free cookies for legacy students," a reference to those whose parents attended Cal.

"If we're going to talk about one form of affirmative action, we should talk about a few other forms that exist," she said.

Not all students engaged in the debate, which at times involved a big knot of people clogging up Sproul.

One onlooker, craning to see what was going on, quipped to a friend, "Oh, it's that black-white thing," and walked away.

Buccaneers linebacker tapped for FSU board

by Melanie Yeager
Knight Ridder Newspapers

The NFL Defensive Player of the Year will fill the vacant spot on the Florida State University board of trustees.

Derrick Brooks, a linebacker for the Super Bowl champion Tampa Bay Buccaneers and FSU alum, was appointed to the board Wednesday by Gov. Jeb Bush. His service began Wednesday and continues until a date that will be set by the Florida Legislature.

"I think that's great," said FSU President T.K. Wetherell about the selection of the 29-year-old FSU graduate. "Derrick brings unique qualities to the table. He was an honors student. He earned both degrees while playing ball. He's such a great role model."

Brooks, who could not be reached late Wednesday, earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in business communications from FSU in 1994 and 1999. He started with Tampa Bay in 1995 and has made a name for himself not just as an athlete, but as a community leader.

In 1996, he began the "Brooks' Bunch," a program for children who attend Boys & Girls Clubs in poor Tampa neighborhoods. The bunch takes field trips to places such as Atlanta and Washington, D.C., to visit museums and historical landmarks. They earn a ticket by completing research assignments related to the planned trip site.

"This year, the focus of the Brooks' Bunch has been on college preparation and what the students must do to apply to a university, submit scholarship applications and learn life skills that they will need for university life," Brooks wrote in the governor's board-appointment questionnaire.

"The trip will include a tour of three or four college campuses, including Florida State University."

Brooks takes the place of former trustee Lee Hinkle, who resigned last week and applied for the job of vice president of university relations at FSU.

"Now we have somebody to keep Thrasher in line," Wetherell joked. John Thrasher is chairman of FSU's 13-member governing board. "I figure if Thrasher starts mouthing off, Derrick Brooks is my man."

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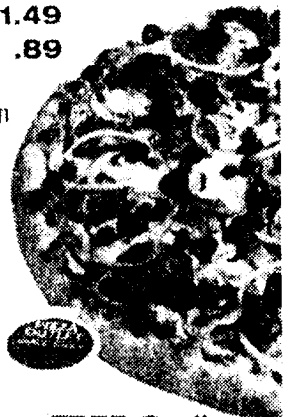
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