

STUDENT LIFE

Race and gender overstated in presidential race



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Clinton and Obama are involved in a race where sex and ethnicity have become a main point.

By Scott Muska
managing editor
srm5082@psu.edu

As a 20 year-old, I've been alive for six different presidential campaigns (including the one that is currently ongoing), and have been what I would call politically aware for two of them. It's not hard for me to decipher, though, that this most recent campaign differs in many extremes from any of the previous races I have been alive for, or any that have even been conducted in the United States. This is due to the candidates that are running, especially as Democratic candidates.

I've always listened to the candidates speak, and I've always seen the commercials that buffer their images and attack those of their opponents, and in this way this year's campaign is no different than any other. However, the angles that have been taken deviate from anything I've ever heard or experienced during a presidential race.

Try as I might, it's impossible to see past the unprecedented characteristics of this year's campaign, especially on the Democratic side of the spectrum. There is no traditional candidate in the running (and by "traditional" I mean an elderly white male), and if the eventual winner of the liberal ticket beats out McCain, it will be either the first woman or first black president of the United States.

I think it's time to look past that, though. It shouldn't matter what gender or ethnicity you are when it comes to being the president of one of the most powerful countries in the world. That kind of classification shouldn't even remotely factor into

the way a campaign is being run or evaluated by the public.

I want to know about the issues. I really do. I'm worried about the economy, and I'm worried about the war. I'm worried about terrorist organizations and healthcare, and if there's any concern over race and gender, it's equality based.

All I want from the next president is some strong leadership that will help put our country back on the right track, and race or gender should have no bearing on that. I understand that it deserves a bit of notoriety since it would be a first in either instance, but it's no way to judge whether or not someone should become Commander-in-chief.

With the Pennsylvania primary election coming up next month, I really hope that the Democratic candidates alter their campaigning methods, and that the media follows suit. It's drastically important for the issues to be brought into the limelight and for their incessant bickering to cease. It's difficult to decide who the most appropriate candidate is if they don't attack the issues that are problematic in today's society.

So far it's been difficult to see where Obama and Clinton even differ in various policies, since their ethnicity and gender have been so overstated. It's gotten to the point that it's becoming annoying, and I don't think I'm the only one that's tired of hearing about it.

The fact that Hillary Clinton is a woman and that Barack Obama is a black man should be neither an advantage or disadvantage for either one of them, so the media should stop treating it as such.

Upcoming events on campus

- Alternative rock band **Third Eye Blind** will be performing on Friday, April 4 at the Junker Center. Tickets are now on sale at the RUB desk and are \$15 for students and \$20 for the general public. Doors will open at 7 p.m. and the concert will begin at 8 p.m.

- The Association of Black Collegians** will host their 11th annual fashion show, called "Lights, Camera, Vogue" on Saturday, March 29. The show will begin in McGarvey Commons at 8 p.m. and will go until 10 p.m. with an after party following until 2:30 a.m. For more information, e-mail lnn107@psu.edu.

- Leadership Unlimited and SAF are sponsoring a day of **tubing at Peek'n Peak** on Sunday, March 30. The cost is \$5 per person for the first 20 people that sign up and all others will pay full price. The group will meet at the RUB desk at 12 p.m. Contact Jen Balsiger, jl5018@psu.edu with questions.

- Environmental strategist and author **Andrew Winston** will be on campus as part of the Speaker Series on Monday, April 7. He will be speaking at 7:30 p.m. in McGarvey Commons and is free to both students and the general public.

- The Penn State Behrend Concert Band's upcoming **Evening of Musical Tomfoolery** will be held on Tuesday, April 1. The fun begins at 8 p.m. in the McGarvey Commons of the Reed Union Building. Admission is free. The concert band will perform a selection of witty, whimsical pieces under the direction of Gary Viebranz, director of instrumental music at the college. On the program are works by Leopold Mozart, P.D.Q. Bach, film composers Danny Elfman and Luis Bonfa, and percussionist Lamar Burkhalter, who also holds the title of musical director for the NFL's Houston Texans. The performance is presented by the college's School of Humanities and Social Sciences. For information, phone Viebranz at 814-898-6289.

You don't need a text book to tell you there is NO substitute for quality.

As a recent college grad, you may be eligible for **\$400 OFF** any new Toyota of your choice* in addition to other incentives.

See your Toyota dealer for details.



buyatoyota.com

*NOT ALL CUSTOMERS WILL QUALIFY. CUSTOMERS RECEIVE \$400 FROM TOYOTA TOWARDS LEASING OR FINANCING THE PURCHASE OF NEW UNTITLED TOYOTA MODELS THROUGH PARTICIPATING TOYOTA DEALERS AND TOYOTA FINANCIAL SERVICES. SEE DEALER OR VISIT WWW.TOYOTAFINANCIAL.COM/FINANCE FOR DETAILS. COLLEGE GRADUATE PROGRAM IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE OR TERMINATION AT ANY TIME