

opinion

Editorial Cheating: What's a Professor to Do?

by James Martin Collegian Editor

Ed Miseta's survey and articles in the last edition of the Collegian have created something of a stir.

Why do we cheat? The answers seem fairly obvious. Usually we cheat in an effort to improve our grades and in other cases individuals cheat in a kleptomaniac state of mind.

whatever reasons students choose to cheat, they do so in the full knowledge of the repercussions. The minimum penalty for cheating on an exam at Penn State is automatic failure for the exam.

In light of this kind of punishment, one wonders why students ever take the risk of getting caught. But the fact is that many students weigh the alternatives on their mental balance sheet, and decide that cheating is worth the risk.

So, the faculty wonders, how do we discourage dishonesty? Their efforts generally amount to passing out different versions of a test and making sure that no one

sits to close to anyone else. These are safety measures, designed to eliminate a lot of the temptation of a casual glance at a neighbors paper. These measures don't insult me. However, some other professors take a different tact. We've all had the experience of a professor who brings a helper or helpers to patrol the classroom, gestapo style, during the course of a test, yelling at students to keep their eyes on their own papers.

I don't mean to be too critical. These individuals mean well. They don't want students to cheat on their exams. They want the students who are studying and working hard, to be rewarded with higher grades than those who are just floating along in class. However I think that

patrolling the classroom like a soviet border guard has an adverse effect. Nobody is more likely to be dishonest than a student whose professor, so obviously demonstrates that he doesn't trust him. Many students will cheat, simply to spite an instructor of this sort. In a case like this, a student knows that the instructor doesn't respect him, so there is no fear of jeopardizing that respect by cheating.

If someone treats us as though we were an honorable person, we will strive to be honorable. I know of a few professors who ask students to sign an academic integrity statement, after which the professor will sit at his desk reading during the course of the exam. Is this professor being gullible? Though some students would use his trust in them to their advantage, I

think that he is sending his students a message of trust and displaying a confidence in them, a confidence that many students would hesitate to betray.

I know of one student who said that though he had cheated on occasion, he had one professor whose class he would never cheat in. The reason: he said he had a lot of respect for the way the professor treated his students.

In addition to trusting the student, I believe that a faculty member can encourage honesty by demonstrating a sincere interest in teaching the class. I had one professor who actually pointed out that he knew we were all there just to fulfill a requirement and that he would much rather be teaching an upper level class of students who were majoring in the subject.

Throughout the course, the professor never changed or improved his attitude. When the day of the first test arrived the result was predictable. Even though the professor took numerous precautions, a vast majority of the class sported cheat sheets which they made full use of. The professor hadn't been trying and neither were they.

In sum, cheating is an unfortunate and all too common an occurrence at Behrend. I don't think that the key to eliminating dishonesty is treating a student like an accused criminal. I think respect and dignity will go a lot further. Perhaps a school-wide honor code would be an incentive for some. Whatever the answer is, I know that if you treat a student like a criminal, he's likely to act like one.

Letters to the Editors

ATTN: Editors' desk:

The consequences for being caught cheating are severe. All students know it. So most students don't like to address the issue seriously (except when trying not to get caught).

In the last edition of the Collegian, an article was printed that shocked a lot of people - male and female alike. Ed Miseta had taken a cheating survey in the Gorge and wrote about his responses. Unfortunately, rather than reporting the results of the survey, he used the opportunity to reduce the female population on this campus to nothing more than an amusement.

"She probably fakes her orgasms too...the most ignorant person I met was a girl (isn't it always a girl?)...Ah women. Can't live with 'em, can't shoot 'em."

Ignorance?? Those statements speak for themselves. And if I'm right, Ed, you aren't a girl...possibly one of those "she-males" you referred to.

I'll admit it, when I first read this article, I laughed at these comments. But then I considered the seriousness of the sexist undertones they presented, even if they were made in jest.

Does it bother you that you can't get away with charming the professors? If you're insinuating that the only way a female can get through higher education is by batting her eyelashes, don't say it too loudly. I can't imagine the

Behrend faculty will appreciate it. Granted, it is a shame that there are a few girls who think that's the way to do it. But I assure you they are not the majority and there is no reason to generalize that attitude.

Even if your survey was serious, you didn't present it as such, and all your hard work was reduced to nothing more than a laugh by some and insult to others. If you're truly this chauvinistic, either keep it out of your articles or write for a different paper. Objectivity should be a requirement for journalists and you are certainly not meeting this requirement.

Now, to address the Collegian Editorial Staff...As a staff member, I know these sexist attitudes are not the views of the Staff. I am surprised this article got through as printed though. Freedom of speech is a constitutional right and maybe as such, Ed's remarks shouldn't be cut from the article. However, there is something to be said for professional standards.

There is a sign we all see around campus that says "RACISM HAS NO PLACE AT PENN STATE...we seek not only a diverse university community but a caring one as well." Shouldn't the Collegian help promote this ideal in all respects?

When this kind of 'slander' appears on your desk, Jim and/or Lisa, please consider the credibility of the Staff in the eyes of its readers. I would hate to see one bad apple ruin the quality of the Collegian.

Respectfully, Julie Gustafson

Dear Editor,

Recently I've been hearing fellow students complaining about the new bookstore and lack of a decent library. I think it's time for you people to get your heads out of the clouds and start asking questions. Here on campus there are several people who are able to help you out with questions. The number ranges from about 100 to 1000. Yes, there are that many people who know the answers to those questions that have been bothering you all semester. So all I'm saying is go out and ask. Stop

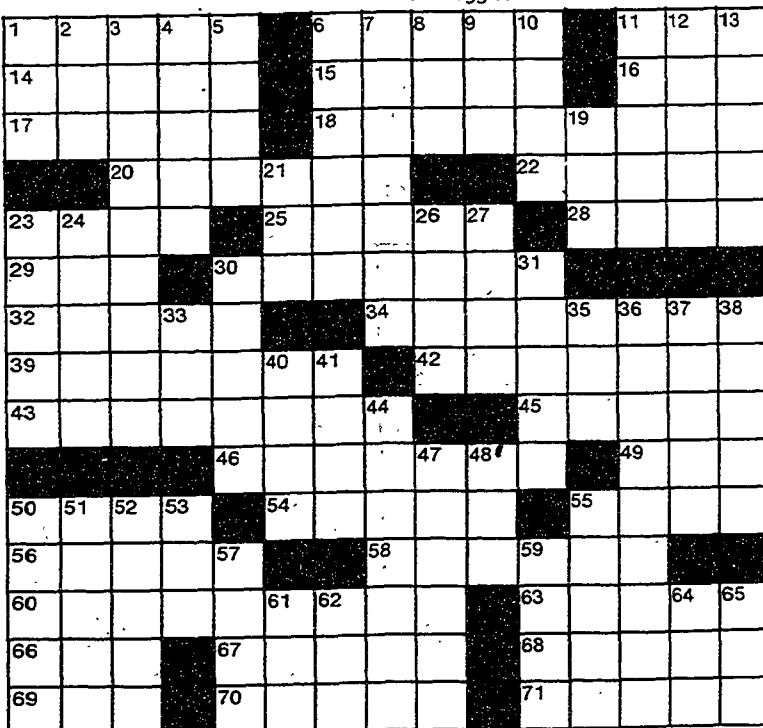
The Answer Man

What Do You Think?

Who do you think best presented his arguments at Monday night's debate? Is there something you feel the Collegian should have covered or covered differently? Do you have any comments or questions you would like to see printed? The Collegian Would like to know! Letters to the Editor for the next Collegian should be dropped off at the RUB desk in an envelope marked COLLEGIAN before 5 p.m. April 6th

TODAY'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- ACROSS: 1 Respond, 6 Sipping tube, 11 Many times: poet, 14 Below: pref., 15 Rumpus, 16 Victory sign, 17 Prorogue, 18 Frog, 20 Print style, 22 Vituperates, 23 Commanded, 25 African animal, 28 majeste, 29 Cretan peak, 30 Putrefies, 32 Fiction, 34 Sturdiest, 39 Beefing, 42 More dapper, 43 Completely, 45 China's Chou, 46 Cavalryman, 49 Adherent: suff., 50 Animal food, 54 Deed holder, 55 Epic poetry, 56 Church table, 58 Marsupials, 60 March style, 63 Play speech, 66 Hostelry, 67 Gem, 68 Mortise fitting, 69 \$100 bill, 70 Realize, 71 Sidled, 5 Irish kings' home, 6 Sweet rolls, 7 Felines, 8 Libertine, 9 Bat wood, 10 Fish trap, 11 Sheepish, 12 Emprises, 13 Verb form, 19 French prom, 21 Harbor, 23 Wild party, 24 Doll up, 26 Makes after taxes, 27 Tumble, 30 Coquette, 31 More certain: pref., 33 Attached to: Answers: 1 Disencumber, 2 Chemical suffix, 3 Sworn statement, 4 Candia, 35 Barrel, 36 Obscuring, 37 From -- sea, 38 Struggles



-More-

-So did you take us seriously? Did you actually think that Dean Lilley would resign, Behrend secede from Penn State, and Julia Child join Food Services all in the same week? These articles (designated MORE), were not only ridiculous and completely fictitious- hopefully they were funny too. The Collegian intends no malice towards any of the individuals mentioned. Please accept them in the spirit of the day. Happy April Fool's Day!



Sensitivity, strength, security. Intelligence. All the qualities women look for in a man can also be found in a foilpack of condoms. They're an extremely effective way to prevent pregnancy. Especially when they're used with contraceptive foam. They're fun to put on, if you use your imagination. And they make a fantastic gift for that special occasion when words... just aren't enough. You can get them at any drugstore or your local Planned Parenthood.

So next time, show how much you care. With foam for her. And condoms for you. It might take a sense of humor. But it's part of getting serious.



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Smoke screen

by Maria Plaza Collegian News Editor

The grey clouds hang heavily in the air, blurring vision and hindering breathing. No, it's not rush Los Angeles; it's a Behrend lobby.

If you breathe, you too have probably noticed this phenomenon. I'm amazed that in spite of the nationwide crackdown on smoking in offices, airplanes, and public places, Behrend students who want to socialize and relax in a smoke-free environment have only two choices: the Wintergreen Cafe or outdoors, (and we all know how fun that is with Erie weather). It's even impossible to walk to class without gagging through polluted hallways and lobbies.

Ever notice those signs in the Nick and Behrend buildings? The ones that say "smoking prohibited in... public lounges except in special segregated areas provided for smokers." What a joke! Every lounge is a smoking area!

I realize that smokers have rights too. Therefore, it would be impractical, to say the least, to ban smoking on campus.

However, non-smokers have the right to clean air. Since the two groups can't share the same areas, the logical thing to do is

lounges. This doesn't seem to be asking too much.

What better opportunity to implement such a program than the opening of the new bookstore area? I suggest that the new lounge(s) be non-smoking. This would be easier and less controversial than changing old lounges. It would also save the new areas from the mesh of ash trays, cigarette butts, and smoke.

I hope that the administration opens their eyes (and nostrils) to this problem and does something about it. I know many students would support them.

Editors Note: It is unfortunate that segregation has to occur to protect the rights of smokers and non smokers alike. However I think Maria's suggestion is an excellent compromise and the Collegian is forwarding it to the administration for their consideration.

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Letter Policy: The Behrend Collegian encourages on news coverage, editorial policy and University affairs. Letters should be typewritten, double-spaced, signed by no more than two people, and not longer than 400 words. Students letters should include the semester and major of the writer. All writers should provide their address and phone number for verification of the letter. The Collegian reserves the right to edit letters for length and to reject letters if they are libelous or do not conform to standards of good taste.

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