

## Editorial / Opinion

# A Grade Escape

The main objective of a college education should be to prepare students for their careers and to help them develop professionally. Unfortunately, too much emphasis is currently placed on the students' academic performances, and the main objective is now to achieve good grades, whether or not any knowledge is attained. This situation has created a somewhat hazardous condition--one which is contradictory to its original purpose--and many students are now working only for a piece of paper, rather than for the knowledge it represents. This is an undesirable state of events, and its progression must be arrested before it is too late.

Today's college systems are based on the premise that by stressing grades and other pertinent figures, students will respond by studying more diligently and will therefore learn more. However, this is only half true--the majority of students will study more, but any knowledge gained will not be retained. The reason that students so readily forget that which has just been studied is because they didn't learn it in the first place--they merely memorized meaningless names, facts, figures, etc. which were insignificant to them, and simply "regurgitated" them to the teacher in a little blue book. With no real understanding of the material, it is easy to see why students cannot retain it. In many instances, students can receive a commendable grade, even though they have little or no perception of what they have just written on their examination papers. There is something dreadfully amiss with a system in which grades are awarded to individuals who haven't the slightest inkling of what is going on. Indeed, these inequities should not occur.

By requiring students to compete with each other for better grades, a tension is also created which entices the students to cheat. When students resort to copying answers from their classmates' papers or cleverly concealing "cheat sheets" anywhere on their persons, it is a sad indication that they are not learning anything. Granted, cheating and all other kinds of dishonesty cannot be condoned or blamed on the pressures of peer competition, but the existing system certainly gives these cheaters added incentive to "do their thing." Perhaps if the grades were not emphasized so much, and the learning was stressed more, the students who cheat would then be more interested in learning, and not how to make it appear as though they were absorbing knowledge.

While grades are certainly important to gauge students' academic achievements, there are other methods which can be feasibly developed and implemented to offset their importance.

For instance, all courses could offer students the pass-fail option. This would relieve the tension of working solely for a grade, but insure the teachers that the students do enough work to deserve the credits they earn. Other solutions can be instituted which would be similarly effective in promoting permanent knowledge rather than transient knowledge.

In conclusion, something must be done to neutralize the obsession with grades in our colleges and universities. Although it may be easy to cheat one's way to a respectable grade point average, it is not quite as easy to cheat one's way to the zenith of his profession in the "real world."

--William J. Neil

## Seeing The Light

In these days of The Drought, when water conservation is the uppermost thing in peoples' minds, the citizenry of Capitol Campus has seemingly closed its eyes to another serious matter: the energy crisis. Numerous examples of the lax attitude toward this dire problem can be found all over the campus.

Each night, long after classes have ended, many of the lights remain on in the Main Building. For no apparent reason, corridors, stairwells, and classrooms are still well lit in the wee hours of the morning. In an act that defies logic, Vendorville shines like the North Star all night long, despite the fact that the last item is sold at 8:00 p.m. Though these may be dubbed "security measures," a much more effective deterrent to crime would be to simply lock the doors, many of which now remain unlocked all night.

This blatant waste of electricity in the Main Building is countered by the lack of lights on the walkway connecting it with the Multi-Purpose Building. Pedestrians who travel this path are forced to grope their way through the uncharted wilderness while the lights overhead remain strangely unlit. This throwback to the pioneer days is deplorable.

In addition to the unnecessary lighting in the Main Building, I also find fault with the abundance of clocks. Though they are a helpful addition in the corridors and offices, it is a waste of both energy and money to install them in the classrooms. The only real purpose served by classroom clocks is to divert students' attention. The most ridiculous aspect of the clock situation, however, is found on the second floor. Here hang two clocks, no more than ten feet apart, both running continuously. To add insult to injury, the two clocks often give different times!

The dormitories are the site of further squandering of electricity. The hallways and bathrooms are perpetually lit up, giving Church and Wrisberg Halls the look of St. Patrick's Cathedral on Christmas Eve. The lounge televisions are seldom--if ever--turned off, not to mention the incessant blaring of stereos from practically every room. These actions are certainly not exemplary of energy conservation.

The Student Center is another area in which lights are left on for no apparent reason. Granted, the study area is open all hours to give students a place to do their work, but can't the lights be left off when it is not being used?

Last, but certainly not least, comes Meade Heights. It is not uncommon to see lights, both interior and porch lights, shining all night long. With this comes the mandatory T.V.'s and stereos blasting continuously--whether or not they have an audience--and all the while eating up electricity.

I trust that it isn't asking too much of our students, faculty, and administration to take corrective measures concerning the energy crisis. In fact, energy conservation here at Capitol Campus can go a long way toward inspiring the surrounding community to follow our example. Just a little effort on everyone's part can make a big difference.

--Dave Caruso

Volume 13, No. 4

**c.c. reader**

February 19, 1981

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Published bi-weekly by the students of The Pennsylvania State University, The Capitol Campus in Middletown, Pennsylvania.

The C.C. Reader has the following four-fold purpose: [1] to keep students informed about their campus community; [2] to provide editorial comment on issues facing the campus community; [3] to serve as a forum for student poetry, photographs, short stories, graphics, and other creative endeavors; [4] to serve as a learning mechanism for all students interested in the journalistic process. This includes reporting, editing, layout, typesetting, and paste-up.

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Circulation 2,500

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