

OPINION

Former SGA president rants on SGA impeachment hearing

By **ARIEL O'MALLEY**
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John Kenneth Galbraith once said, "All of the great leaders have had one characteristic in common: It is the willingness to confront unequivocally the major anxiety of their people in their time. This, and not much else, is the essence of leadership."

During the impeachment hearing on Nov. 6, the current Student Government leadership failed to accomplish this!

Several articles of impeachment were brought to the attention of the SGA. Somehow, through clever wordplay, there was focus on only one of the issues: whether or not Marques Stewart had broken the constitutional guidelines by appointing the members of the SGA to committees within the organization.

Sadly the elected "leaders" of this campus lacked the ability to focus on another issue of whether or not the constitution was infringed upon when the president did not complete his responsibility by not allowing

the senators to vote on the chairs of the committees nor the members of the committees.

He cleverly tried to skirt around this issue by saying that the committees were approved three weeks ago. However the articles of impeachment were written and submitted over a month ago. He did not have the committees approved nor did he show any intention of doing so until he realized that it was impeachable. Having the committees approved after being served with impeachment papers does not excuse your mistake.

I am truly disappointed at the way the entire situation has been handled. From the beginning, the impeachment articles have been leaked and discussed. At the hearing itself, there was constant laughing and talking amongst the senators and a complete lack of respect and maturity. The whole ordeal was made into a complete joke. Perhaps Penn State Harrisburg should take a lesson from University Park and create a new student leadership organization that puts the current one to shame.

It would have been a blessing if the

senators had acted their age rather than their GPA for the impeachment proceedings. If only they could have been mature and focused on the issue that they were there for rather than making it personal. I am not quite sure how the hearing became about the character of Marques Stewart or about the various projects he has taken part in while being president rather than the fact that he lacked the ability to follow his own organization's constitution. Let alone the constant personal attacks on myself to which I was not even given an opportunity to provide any sort of defense.

Then there is the issue of *legislating from the bench*. When did this become appropriate?! Taking a vote as to whether or not Dustin Holler should be allowed to vote was not a kosher move! Regardless of the fact that he wrote and signed the articles of impeachment does NOT change the fact that he is still a senator. He was elected by the students to represent the students. And simply because he took the necessary steps to express the unhappiness of a portion of his student body does not

mean that he should have his vote taken away because someone feels that he has a conflict of interest. Marques Stewart's own fraternity brother stood up and said that they were brothers and "like family." No one could possibly think that this was not going to create some kind of bias.

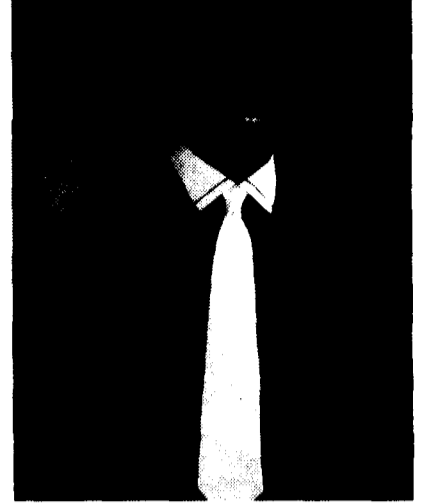
Not to mention the fact that the voting in itself was corrupt. Thanks to the advisor of SGA deciding it was her place to talk, the senators voted simply on removing President Stewart from office rather than voting on the three separate articles of impeachment first. She completely side-barred and smothered the voice of the student appointed Chief Justice. The vote was taken that if one voted yes they were saying that they found Marques Stewart guilty of the charges as well as agreeing that he should be removed from office. The proper measures were not taken to decide whether or not Marques Stewart was guilty of the articles brought against him. They simply moved directly onto whether or not he should be removed from office. In the United States of America,

an individual is not sentenced until the parties' guilt is determined. Then once found guilty, if one is charged with the murder of three different people, but only one of the accounts can be proven, the person goes to jail for the murder of the one person. They are not set free with absolutely no punishment whatsoever. I realize that the SGA impeachment is nowhere near the same as murder, however the same basic principle applies.

All of this brings me to question how the rest of this year will proceed. If the SGA does not hold its own leader accountable for his actions, what gives them the right to hold anyone else accountable for any wrongdoing that may happen in the remaining months? As a past leader of the SGA, I must say that the road the current leaders are heading down is quite dark and dangerous. I truly hope they are all aware of repercussions that are bound to follow.

Josiah Charles Stamp once said, "It is easy to dodge our responsibilities, but we cannot dodge the consequences of dodging our responsibilities."

President's Corner



By **MARQUES STEWART**
SGA President
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HELLO PENN STATE.....YES I AM STILL YOUR PRESIDENT.☺ Below you will find the letter I read at my impeachment hearing.

As I stated before, when you have support from others you can get through anything.

The drama that has went on the SGA office over the last month has been dramatic, I am glad to say we are starting to make our way out of it. Now to the litigations brought before you, please let me take the time to inform you about some miss information.

There was a sign up sheet passed around in the SGA meeting last semester as many of you can contest.

The same sheet was sign up sheet was hanging in the office over the summer.

I sent out an email to my Exec Board as well as verbally stating to Mr. Holler that the deadline for this task was Aug 6 2007.

When I sent out the committees on that day, I literally typed them from the sheet of paper into Angel.

Later that week I spoke to Dustin to make sure, he was comfortable with them and he said yes.

So I am being impeached because I did not put the committees on the Agenda to be approved.

I trust in you to make the responsible decision. You have read over the impeachment charges. You are all responsible adults and I trust that you will do what is best for the student government and student body.

Regardless, of what has happen or said about me of the last weeks or even since the start of my Presidency, I have not brought any personal bias into this SGA. As it is quoted at the end of my email

Delegating work works, provided the one delegating works too. No one can say I have not worked to make this school better.

Know that I have uncompromising loyalty- loyalty to Penn State, Our Campus, the Faculty and Staff, the SGA, and most importantly you the Students.

Yes, some may say the SGA image is poor right now...ACT NOW AND HELP US CHANGE IT...JOIN THE SGA. If you are interested in becoming a member, please email me: MES5169@PSU.EDU so we can set up an interview. I promise to you that the image will be change. If you have any ideas please email me at the above email. REMEMBER this is your Student Government Association. Thanks..... Good Luck in all classes.

-Marques

Student feels let down by SGA

By **MATTHEW CARROLL**
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People who know me know that I freely voice my opinion even when I often times should be silent. These people also know that when it comes to putting words to paper I resentfully do so, but the proceedings that occurred during the impeachment hearing on Tuesday, Nov. 6 appalled my sensibility.

My basic understanding of the basic intent of the hearing was to determine whether or not the president of the Student Government Association acted in violation of the constitution written and voted in place by this and previous administrations.

During the proceedings these accusations were never truly addressed nor were they judged or voted upon on an indictment-by-indictment basis. The Student Government Association rather used the majority of the time in the hearing to address personal issues of character of both the accused and others. Unfortunately some of the senate made accusations against members of the previous administration who were either not

in attendance or not allowed to speak during the proceedings.

In the end, the lack of decorum and loose adherence to judicial proceedings disenfranchised me to the concept that our elected officials are capable individuals of handling my student activity fee involuntarily assessed on my tuition.

During the proceeding it became clear that the Student Government Association constitution was viewed as a seemingly worthless piece of paper not even worth printing on anything more expensive than the cheapest toilet paper.

This creates a moral dilemma for me when it comes to involvement with clubs and organizations on campus whose goals and ideals I may share. If I join a club or organization on campus, I do not feel that I will be stuck in a difficult position where I am required to follow not only the club or organization's constitution, but also be in accordance with the wishes of the Student Government Association's constitution and wishes to have any chance of receiving any funds to engage in activities promoting said club or organization. The dilemma arises when I compliance to the Student Government Association's rules

only apply to clubs or organizations wishing to receive funds not those who are responsible for the equitable distribution of money rightfully belonging to each and every student on campus.

I'd also like to add that if our current Student Government Association truly reflects the student body as a whole, I fear for our future. It is embarrassing to have my name associated with individuals who when given positions of authority cannot set aside personal politics when making tough leadership decisions.

Although this letter may be insulting to some who read it, I know that I am not without blame myself and am willing to admit my faults. It is my fault for not taking greater care when casting my vote last spring and I can only blame myself for not running for office knowing full well that I would be unable to fulfill the time commitment necessary to serve office in the Student Government Association.

I applaud those who ran and serve for their service and know that it may not be the fault of the members of the Student Government Association but rather my own lofty expectations of my elected student leaders.

Letter to the Editor

To the editor:

As per your article in The Capital Times, October 29, 2007 Students speak out against ban.

First off I am not a smoker, but have many friends who are smokers.

It is a choice to smoke and to ruin your own health.

Just like being overweight is my own choice and no one elses. The reason I am writing you is because of this paragraph in your article:

"A comparison of banning overweight people from buying french fries to the smoking ban here at PSH has been made.

Poyrazli sites that fat is as much as a health risk as smoking."

A person being overweight in no way affects anyone else. A person smoking does affect everyone else. I think this paragraph was rude and uncalled for.

Many people such as myself and skinny people have health concerns that are aggravated by others smoking.

Why should we have to suffer from other peoples choice to

smoke?

I honestly think that the whole campus grounds should have no smoking.

You can't smoke at certain restaurants, public places, or other school grounds so what is the big difference in not being allowed to smoke on campus.

If the faculty doesn't like the fact they can't smoke on campus deal with it.

For years smokers have affected people with asthma or other health concerns with smoke on campus, and we have dealt with it.

So let it be the smokers turn to deal with it, and don't try to compare obesity to it.

Agatha Lauder-English
Senior
Environmental Engineering

EC: To clear up any confusion, the opinions expressed in the mentioned article were not my own, but those of students and faculty that I interviewed. It is the job of the reporter to report all sides of a story.

National Insecurity: Why I'm going to jail

By **MARTY SANTALUCIA**
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George W. Bush is an idiot. I did not support him in 2000, I did not like him in 2004, and today my feelings of animosity toward his way of governing our country have finally found the limits of the English language. An overwhelming majority of ideals supported by the Bush Administration have been in contradiction to rational thought and in their execution have only served to drive the American people further from each other and any opportunity of progress toward a common goal. The damage to this country caused by Mr. Bush and his puppeteers ultimately fails to achieve an irreversible level; however, our children, and possibly generations beyond that, will be re-organizing the freedoms and values which were thrown to the floor during the these eight years. Efforts by Bush's inter-circle to use national resources and disasters for their own interests are, of course, not designed for the public's eye to scrutinize and are only discovered when a lackey of Mr. Bush (or Mr. Bush himself) causes so much noise we, the public,

cannot help but notice what is going on in the shadows from which they operate.

This week, I would like to consider whether a statement such as my previous paragraph is appropriate in the current climate of growing anti-American sentiments and the War on Terror. Other than earning one a ten year vacation to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, do comments doubting and condemning the actions of our government actually harm our freedoms by 'emboldening the enemy'?

In reading over my previous pieces, I saw that I have frequently questioned George W. Bush. I never considered myself anti-American; in fact, I felt that my statements were very patriotic in the respect that I was exercising my rights. To summarize those past comments I opened this week's editorial with the points I have made in previous pieces and will continue to pursue for the 436 days that George W. Bush is in office (but who is really counting) - two more years in Gitmo for me. Typically, I would approach this in a very open manner and finally come to a conclusion which lies somewhere between the extremes. On this topic, however, I can only

say that questioning the government and holding those in office publicly accountable for their mistakes is the only way to maintain those freedoms which we are so often defending - add another year to my Cuban stay.

The subject is one of Bill O'Reilly's favorites to go on about on *The Factor*, a show I admittedly tried to stop watching but missed the laughs. O'Reilly claims that the media hurts our efforts overseas by reporting on actions which the public would see as negative and thus manipulates public perception to their agenda. The truth is most likely a far less sinister ratings game, yet O'Reilly persist in his traditional good/evil way of thinking. He insists that publicly disagreeing with the government or actions of the government is nothing short of anti-American propaganda. In a recent series of segments O'Reilly focused on movies which indirectly questioned the methods being used to execute the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. While O'Reilly paints this as a terrible trend, it is exactly the opposite.

Historically, O'Reilly and those who agree with him have precedence, and at one point would have also had laws which supported their views. During World War I, President

Woodrow Wilson pushed for the passage of the Espionage Act of 1917 and later the Sedition Act of 1918. Anarchists and Socialists, which held the government's distrust and hatred in the same way that terrorists do today, were targeted and jailed for voicing political views which the government had deemed dangerous. Unlike the terrorists of today, however, these early 1900's Anarchists were often arrested because they chose to, during a time of war, "willfully utter, print, write or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government of the United States or the Constitution of the United States or the military or naval forces of the United States, or the flag of the United States, or the uniform of the Army or Navy of the United States" (Sedition Act, 1918).

I dare you to sneeze wrong under that kind of government - three more years because Karl Rove really liked that law.

Fortunately, most of the law was repealed in the 1920's and finished off in Supreme Court rulings by the 1970's. A call to return to that sort of legislation or standard troubles me. Our government is designed so that it is run by the citizens with

resistance strategically placed to prevent spastic and knee-jerk changes to the government and laws. Before a person assumes an office, they must first be hired by the people and are therefore responsible to the people. Removing that step, the official no longer sees the public as their boss, which really explains George Bush - two more years for me.

I understand that leaders must balance what needs to be done and what the public wants. This is a balance, however, that should be heavily tipped to the public's favor. Struggles between the public and the government are what ultimately generate progress. Stopping that process allows the government to gain amounts of power which are seldom returned quickly, if at all. Calling the public's outcry against the actions of our government 'anti-American' is far more damaging to our freedoms than anything an enemy could do short of seizing control of the government itself. It is important, especially in times of conflict, that the public remember what rights they have and that they continue to exercise them to the fullest. Just because you may not be on the front line doesn't mean that you shouldn't be fighting for your freedom too.