

opinions

The Daily Collegian
Thursday, April 14

editorial opinion

A risk worth taking

It's plain ridiculous. After 18 months of benign political banter, the State College Municipal Council still can't reconcile the McAllister Alley problem.

Plans to close the alley to vehicular traffic and construct a pedestrian mall were rejected after the municipal solicitor informed council it could face a court challenge. Under the proposal, the borough would still have possession of the alley, while the owners of The Tavern Restaurant, 220 E. College Ave., would pay to construct and maintain the mall.

The council is also not sure of the alternative — to close the alley and construct a borough-financed walkway.

It's inexcusably pathetic that council members took 18 months to discover their ignorance of the issue's legal consequences, considering the municipal solicitor's initial warning signal came in November of 1981. Certainly the council must digest the implications — both positive and negative — that construction of such a mall would pose. But at this point, a year-and-a-half later, Municipal Solicitor Robert Kistler cued in on the problem when he said, "spend the funds on a plan and let someone sue us."

Council should approve the proposal that Tavern owners Pat Daugherty and Bill Tucker submitted: to spend \$40,000 on the mall, which would include an outside dining area for the Tavern Restaurant.

It does not seem logical to place the financial burden of such a project on bo-

rough taxpayers when local entrepreneurs are willing to make the financial commitment.

And what would be the real benefit of closing off an alley simply for the sake of redirecting traffic? Yes, one less dangerous intersection would result, but an abandoned, untraveled roadway would lead to vandalism and loitering.

Also, the optimal solution would not involve a borough-constructed walkway. What real pleasure could be derived from sitting in a bleak pedestrian walkway? Sipping a cool drink at an outdoor cafe certainly sounds more inviting than staring at a brick wall in an abandoned alley.

The Tavern's owners have made an offer for construction of outdoor dining. They've made an offer to beautify borough property. And they've proposed a way to do it without spending precious borough tax dollars.

How much longer than the 18 months it's taken council to request research for the proposal's potential legal problems will the offer stay intact?

Council members can only hope that The Tavern owners remain dedicated to the project, but they must realize that dedication has its limits.

It's too late for foresight on the part of council members. The time has long passed for overly cautious, conservative considerations. It's time to take action — even if that action implies risks.



"I NEVER MET A MAN I DIDN'T LIKE... UNTIL I MET A REPORTER."

reader opinion

Thanks for caring

On behalf of the 500 million hungry in the State College Area, the United States and the world, we thank all of you who participated in some way in the "Fast for the Hungry" March 21 to 24.

Whether through fasting and/or donating money to the State College Area Food Bank, seeking to better your understanding of the hunger problem through participation in the programs of speakers, films and discussions offered or volunteering your time and energies in publicity, programming, etc., we are grateful for your concern. The State College Area Food Bank thanks all of you for your support.

We also want to thank our speakers, the Science, Technology and Science program and the Penn State film library for providing the expertise and resources for the educational programming.

We thank the Associated Student Activities office as well as the entire HUB staff for all of their help in the details of the program. We also thank the HUB Sign Shop, Penn State and Architecture Interest House for painting the banners. Finally, we thank our own secretary who was of help with numerous aspect of the Fast.

There are no simple solutions or easy answers to the problem of feeding the hungry of the world. But there are solutions and answers to be worked for to provide all of the world's inhabitants with the food they need.

One of our speakers spoke of a "philosophy of solidarity" with regard to the poor and hungry of the world. Solidarity means a willingness to work for and with the poor and hungry to find solutions to the problems which involve all of us as human persons on the earth.

Solidarity is a commitment to work for justice for all of the world's people.

Again, thank you for your participation in the Fast.

Timothy Spring, intern pastor
University Lutheran Parish
April 4

was misleading because it concentrated nearly exclusively on a few negative comments about the University made in interviews. Does it not strike anyone that the recruiting competition between colleges and universities in the Pittsburgh area and Penn State for students and student athletes may encourage the Press to make Penn State look bad?

Minority recruitment and retention is a recognized problem at Penn State. The Press appears to be taking unfair advantage, however.

Bill Pounds, class of 1975
April 8

Jobs and ERA

To Kelly Fracassa: I am not sure if you wrote your piece against the ERA as an exercise in debate or if you meant it. In either case, there are several points with which I must take issue.

Ms. Friedman and Ms. Smeal have pointed out some real reasons why we need to keep fighting for the ERA. Women are not inherently lazy people. Why do you think women doctors see 40 percent fewer patients? Because there is a large proportion of the

population (mostly male) who won't go to a woman doctor because of her gender. This kind of archaic thinking could lead to job discrimination in hospitals and clinics.

Woman doctors see fewer patients not because they are lazy, but because of the primitive attitudes of many people in the U.S. population.

If women can "rise above" their cultural restrictions, how can they be given the chance if, legally, they have no right to fight these prejudices?

Further, please note the word "cultural." The problem is not that women make bad executives but that some women (and some men) make bad executives. Without the ERA those women who are business oriented have no guarantee of receiving the same pay for the same work unless they are willing to start their own businesses.

Yes, promotions and salary decisions should be based on ability. Women, however, need further protection from the male employer who is resentful of the bright upstart who is "just going to get married and have babies anyway."

I am sorry, but "college degrees and who has been in what position for how long" is important in deciding salary and promotions. If these things were not important, why are you in graduate school in business administration?

Or, are you afraid that you may not get hired because a better qualified (gasp) woman may get hired instead?

Without the ERA women will have a harder time facing "the real cultural restrictions" imposed by threatened men. Women who have "successfully bypassed" these prejudices did it with no thanks to men like you.

Candace B. Levy, graduate-anthropology
April 7

the Collegian
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contrast

Minority situation: no problem

"I thought the issue was equality in terms of respect and opportunity, not in terms of percentages," stated Kevin Ramsey on the March 28th editorial page.

Many people who complain about the so-called statistical underrepresentation of blacks at Penn State like to blame it on racism. Why not? It's easy, popular and one can get away with it.

In response to Ramsey's logical suggestion to make student recruiting racially unbiased, USG Senator Darneil Daisey wrote on the April 12 Daily Collegian Op-Ed page that "the system is already biased — biased toward those who were given the opportunity of obtaining a good education and wealth." He calls the net result racism.

Kelly Fracassa

Daisey (and many others) entirely miss the point. What is Penn State biased against: race, or poor educational background and/or lack of financing? If it's the latter two, then Penn State is not a racist institution.

Generally, many blacks are educated in inner-city schools and public schools in the rural South; both are notorious for poor education. And people from these areas aren't exactly rolling in money; many can't afford an education at a top-notch university.

Penn State reflects these problems; it certainly isn't the root cause. Should Penn State be responsible for offsetting the problems of poor education and lack of money?

The University could simply accept black students with little regard to educational background, but what

would this accomplish? Author Thomas Sowell provides some insights: "... there is little humanitarianism in having a youngster's hopes raised unrealistically, then wasting two or three years of his life as he struggles to meet standards for which he lacks preparation and finally booting him out after he has served his statistical purpose."

Should graduation and classroom standards be lowered? That question is so ridiculous it doesn't deserve an answer. Should Penn State try to attract black students specifically in some other fashion? How?

Any serious student is attracted to a university because of high educational standards and a top-notch faculty. A good education can't be tailored to any specific race or culture.

Many foreign students come from entirely different cultures to study here. If Penn State can attract these students, it can attract anybody.

Now, what about this pseudo-racist atmosphere here at Penn State? Many complain that, among other things, blacks and whites cluster at separate tables.

I see more of a division between Asian students and whites, but I don't hear anyone complaining about this.

If people aren't randomly distributed in terms of culture, race or language, then they're probably not randomly distributed in the lunchroom or anywhere else. No government or university can or should try to decide who should be associating with whom and to what extent.

Equality — or racial justice — can't be measured through statistical analysis. Penn State has nothing to be ashamed of. Attacking Penn State for something it's not responsible for is like breaking a thermometer because it registers in the lunchroom or anywhere else. The main purpose of a university is to provide a quality education, not to be used as a tool for someone else's arbitrary ideas of social justice.

Kelly Fracassa is a graduate student in business administration and a columnist for The Daily Collegian.

Penn State's attitude problem

Recently, because of the Op-Ed page on the minority situation and the response it has generated, I've heard much anger from those who contend that the blame for the situation should not fall on the University.

Today, the other columnist in this section argues the same point — that the problem is not Penn State's, that the problem began earlier in the educational system and doesn't concern this non-racist university.

But this University is part of the entire educational system. The administration cannot simply point fingers at those involved with pre-college levels of education, charging them with the responsibility of mending the situation "in the lower grades."

The same administrators cannot and should not neglect the problem at the university level because it does not cease to be a problem at that level.

Anna Hardoby

A problem does exist at the University, and it is more than the statistical underrepresentation of minorities. Its cause is rooted in more than the University's inability to recruit or retain minorities and it cannot be adequately addressed by spouting percentages and quotas or goals.

Rather, those statistics are manifestations, or results of, an attitude. The statistics reflect the University's and students' attitude on the issue. And they send a message on the attitude to those minorities considering attending Penn State: "You can come here, but don't plan on staying on very long."

So it's more than a numerical lack of black faculty, a numerical lack of programs and a numerical lack of fellow students — it's an attitude that says this University doesn't see the need to change those numbers.

So many things at the University are results of this attitude, things that the University should indeed be ashamed of and at least acknowledge, if not actively work to rectify.

Little things like students clustering at dining hall tables according to color and not according to a willingness to share their individuality, diversity and friendship. Things like students receiving reproach for reaching outside their group to someone who doesn't fit that particular group mold.

But is that the University's fault? Isn't it the fault of those individuals, a product of their own tenacity and unwillingness to "break away?"

It's everyone's — including the University's — fault to some extent. The University, like the individuals making the supposedly free choices to stay apart, cannot be excused. Something is wrong at an institution when groups feel the need to stay segregated because they perceive an "us against them" situation — a situation that should not exist at the University, a situation that must change.

The details of the situation — such as upgrading education at all levels and hiring more black faculty — surely must change. But before these things make the transition, the attitude must change.

We must put aside our anger, resentment and flame-throwing long enough to acknowledge and admit that the problem is there. We have to take ourselves off opposing teams and work together as people — whether we're black or white or Asian people — toward making the University an attractive educational and social institution for anyone, regardless of race.

Renae Hardoby is a 12th-term prelaw major and editorial editor of The Daily Collegian.

No cheers for cheerleading anymore

Tension. It's all around her, settling in the pit of her stomach as her number is called. She walks over to the judges and smiles. They stare back. For a moment she goes blank, but then the music starts and it's too late to back out. She puts on her best smile, and like a wind-up doll, kicks and jumps. She is nervous, but still she smiles. After all, this is cheerleading tryouts, and cheerleading is supposed to be fun.

Cheerleading — the word means excitement and glamour and smiles. But people at Penn State don't smile any more when cheerleading is mentioned. Too many people are too bitter about certain aspects of cheerleading.

I wouldn't want to be a judge. Their problems can get worse. They have to match up the women with the men, so that the men don't have to strain themselves doing the lifts.

This makes sense, but the system has a flaw. It excludes some of the best women just because there are no male cheerleaders strong enough to lift them. If a woman has all the qualifications for a cheerleader, if she has something to offer Penn State, she shouldn't be cut because of a few inches.

Judges who have all these worries shouldn't also have to concern themselves with accusations that tryouts are "fixed." One way to ensure unbiased judging would be to bring in judges that are not affiliated with Penn State but do know something about cheerleading. With unbiased judges, cheerleaders would be less likely to be chosen based on who they know rather than what they know.

At the very least, the judges should be rotated

every few years so that the same people don't judge year after year. The new judges should attend a seminar where they are told exactly what to look for. They need some clear guidelines in addition to a simple list of criteria to use to determine what is average and what is a 10 on the 10-point rating scale.

One way to give the judges some basis for comparison would be to require that everyone go through first cuts, even those who were on the squad the year before. All the students trying out want the same job, and a privileged few shouldn't be excused from first and second cuts. No one group should have precedence over the others trying out.

But tryouts are only one aspect of cheerleading. When tryouts are over, it doesn't mean that the cheerleaders are free to rest on their laurels. They have shown their talent for kicking, jumping, and lifting, but the intensity of tryouts doesn't carry over into the field. Granted, they do their routines and show off their lifts, but how often do they really get the crowd going?

Their cheers for the crowd lack innovation. They need to channel some of the creativity they put into their dance routines into some methods for getting the crowd involved.

People get tired of shouting "State" after "Penn" all the time. Cheerleaders need something new, something new to get the crowd roaring for those players and for their school.

The lion does more to psych up the crowd than the whole cheerleading squad. Maybe we should pick twelve lions.

Kim Clark is a 6th-term English major and a columnist for The Daily Collegian.

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