

# opinions

The Daily Collegian  
Friday, Feb. 10, 1984

## editorial opinion

### Student aid cuts: No way!

It's budget time again. Time for everyone to watch what changes the Reagan administration will try to slip in while no one is looking. And student aid is once again targeted as a potential victim. The battle cry in Washington is similar to last year — let those free-loading students help themselves through school. While the 1985 budget proposal does call for increased funding for the College Work-Study and Guaranteed Student Loan programs, Reagan has called for no new funding for Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, National Direct Student Loans and State Student Incentive Grants.

The budget also calls for the restructuring of the entire federal aid system so students must first apply for College Work-Study and loan programs before becoming eligible for Pell Grants.

This contradicts the original concept that Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.) had, envisioning a grant program as the bedrock to ensure that all students have access to a college education.

And while the proposals are supposed to increase the awards for the neediest students so they can attend more expensive schools, about 300,000 students will be completely eliminated from the program if the budget goes through according to Administration wishes. So much for increases.

According to The Chronicle of Higher Education, the philosophy of the Reagan administration is to restructure the federal aid programs because increases in aid diminish the "sense of responsibility" that students and their families feel for financing an education.

Well, the budget planners obviously haven't been paying attention to college students who work during the summer and

throughout the year to finance their education. Or how about the parents who save their money for years, just so their children can have a better life than they had?

Under this plan, to receive a Pell grant, students would be expected to contribute 40 percent — or a minimum of \$500 — of their educational expenses through work and loans.

But if those in the administration would consult with the planners in higher education, they would realize the concept of self-help is already built into the federal aid programs. For instance, here at the University, a student contribution of \$800 is already factored into every aid package before a single dollar of federal aid is "handed out."

In addition, the Guaranteed Student Loan program is the largest federal aid program at the University. Students are borrowing and repaying those aid dollars, with interest, after they graduate. This isn't charity; it's the sense of responsibility the Reagan administration has claimed students lack.

But there is a group in Washington who have managed to see this. This group is the same Republican Senate and Democratic House that rejected Reagan's similar ideas last year.

Congress refused to approve the drastic changes in aid programs during the 1984 budget process because it should be reserved for the funding — not the restructuring — of federal programs.

The Reagan administration should drop the archaic view that students are getting a free ride through college.

When something works, leave it alone. Congress should take the restructuring proposals for what they are — an instant replay of last year — and send it back with the same response — no way.



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## reader opinion

### Equal recognition

I enjoyed reading the advice from Penn State graduates "who made it big." All the same, I did miss hearing the voices of female alumni. Are there none that could join the luminaries whose photographs are prominently displayed on page 3 of Tuesday's Daily Collegian? Or was there a special reason for leaving them out?

Whatever the answers, they reveal an unjust omission at some level. Is the University adequately addressing the problem of this injustice?

Madhu Suri Prakash, assistant professor of education  
Feb. 8

### No apology necessary

I would like to ask Tammy D. Sarge what she thinks the Reader Opinion page is for, if not to express opinions. I apologize for having a point of view different than Tammy's (it seems she thinks an apology is necessary).

If, as she says, one should write to the specific party that one has a gripe against, why then did she feel it necessary to slander Michael Newman and Dave Schulman on the Opinion Page rather than writing directly to them? I'm hoping for having "outrageous ideas about State College's radio stations" and "metal-headed news," whatever that means.

Tammy is obviously very outspoken; I can't figure out why she wants to keep this right from others.

I do have a large record collection, I do have a job and I do continue to buy records to listen to when the radio gets monotonous. But how am I supposed to choose which records to buy if I never hear anything new on the radio? I think it is great that people are trying to make a loud

noise about WQWK. Hopefully, a few letters on the Opinion Page will inspire people to write to the radio station and complain. (Or maybe someone at WQWK reads the Opinion Page.)

A telecommunications major should know that radio isn't "given to us practically free." Every time we buy a product, a substantial portion of the price we pay goes towards advertising on radio, TV and in newspapers.

By the way, if anyone wants to try a new station, WQQW from Williamsport (97.7 FM) plays a wide variety of rock, including new music. It's a little hard to get, but with your antenna a little.

Maybe if WQWK finally realizes that they have some competition, they'll shape up.

Jon Loos, sophomore-electrical engineering  
Feb. 7

### Publicity, not apathy

We are writing in response to The Daily Collegian editorial "Blood donors: No time for apathy." The author of this article made an unfair charge against the students of Penn State.

Apathy implies prior knowledge and present indifference. Therefore, how can students be apathetic if they aren't aware a bloodmobile is on campus? The problem here isn't apathy, but rather lack of publicity.

We had no idea that there was a bloodmobile until late Tuesday when we happened to walk by the HUB, and many of our friends said the same thing. The Collegian carried nothing about the bloodmobile until Wednesday (the second day of the blood drive) when a small notice appeared in Collegian Notes.

The only flyer announcing the bloodmobile that we saw

was on the front of the counter at McLanahan's. Granted, McLanahan's is a busy place, but one flyer there is hardly enough. Why can't notices be posted in the dorms and dining halls?

Obviously, publicity does help — one has only to look at the rival blood drives between dorm areas, where donors are actively sought. Why not incorporate this theme into the all-university bloodmobile and set up competition between dorm houses or halls?

Instead of criticizing the students for their apathy, why not actively encourage them to donate blood by increasing the publicity concerning the bloodmobiles?

Linda Lee Zehr, junior-rehabilitation education  
Jean Hopper, sophomore-industrial engineering  
Feb. 8

### Clear message

In late February, the U.S. Senate will discuss HR 3231, a bill which would restrict American loans to South Africa and prohibit the importation of South African gold coins into this country. Furthermore, it would require Americans, who have large South African operations, to engage in nondiscriminatory wage and promotion practices and provide penalties for violators.

At present, the United States is the second largest source of foreign investment in South Africa. More than 300 U.S. corporations are operating there with investments totaling \$2.6 billion. Thus, American business has helped give South Africa an economic boost upon which apartheid can flourish.

As a nation committed to racial equality and human rights, we can no longer justify increasing American investments to nourish the economic growth of the South African regime — a regime that denies 80% of the

population the right to participate fully in the social, political and economic life of that country.

If this bill is passed by the Senate it will not end apartheid. It does, however, represent a moderate official attempt at ending apartheid. It will send a clear, forcible message to South Africa that America's economic support cannot be used to strengthen the doctrine of apartheid while trying to bring about peaceful changes through negotiation and diplomacy.

Committee for Justice in South Africa  
B. Chadwick, senior-electrical engineering  
Feb. 7

### Successful PSU women

The "Free Lance" feature in The Daily Collegian (Feb. 7) which dealt with advice from outstanding alumni was interesting but I noted a glaring omission. Of the 14 alumni quoted about the "rough road to success," not one was a woman!

The Alumni Association lists, as of July, 226,928 active (alive with addresses available) alumni of whom 73,095 are women. Surely, since we constitute one-third of the alumni, you could have found one or more successful woman graduates who had some advice about making it to the top and how her years at Penn State had contributed.

Granted, we have no senators, astronauts or pro football players in the alumnae ranks but someone must be "famous" enough to warrant our attention. As the third generation of women (and men) in my family to attend Penn State, I would hope you will at least try to correct this slight with an article on significant alumnae of the University in a future issue.

Lee K. Puphal, graduate-extension education  
Feb. 8

## Thoughtful uncertainty preferred over cocksure ignorance

Whoever invented freedom of speech must have run to the patent office shouting "Eureka! Eureka!" before he had time to realize what he was getting the world into. Did he, for instance, realize that readers would be subjected to styles of writing they were not used to, opinions they did not like, and horror of horrors, articles by foreigners? Maybe not.

Did he, moreover, realize that readers would be subjected to anonymous phone calls at 2 a.m.? Of course not.

Nor could he have realized that the license given by his invention would inspire a great many people to become expert on politics almost overnight. This is kind of unfair to those who devote all their lives to becoming the same.

Let me explain. If I write, "The first law of thermodynamics is that if you throw a stone on the moon, photosynthesis will occur on Mercury," even a very hurried editor would push the paragraph delete button. But when someone writes "All socialism does is wreck economies," no frown appears on the editor's face, and the excerpt is published in full.

That's because anyone who reads The New York Times or watches TV or does

none of the above is allowed to consider himself an expert on politics. Being self-opinionated and witty helps. If you are able to develop a small bombast, one or two inappropriate analogies, a clever suppression of facts, the use of oratory, or a total disregard for context — behold, a political commentator (or propagandist) is in business.

How easy it is to tar all Marxists with the same brush, whether they be Maoists, Sandinistas, the Peruvian military, the Indian communists or the Angolan government. How easy it is to sit in judgement and say that peasants who kill landlords are as much to blame as landlords who kill peasants. When you have only two colors on your palette, it is easy to forget that shades of gray and red also exist.

No wonder voters are confused when elections approach. Very few have the political acumen to know whether the real issues are national security, supply-side economics, the Marines in Lebanon, high interest rates, the free world or just the size of their social security checks. It is not easy to distinguish between media hype, govern-

ment myth and harsh reality. Given all the confusion on the political front, some political theorists admit, albeit reluctantly, that the most stable democracies are those with a relatively lower degree of popular participation — like the United States.

On the contrary, since knowledge is power, it is not safe to leave decision-making power in too few hands. The technicalities of the nuclear arms buildup tend to make ordinary people diffident about staking their claim on the issue.

When Carl Sagan says, "The only way to cut nuclear weapons is to cut nuclear weapons," it seems that there must be more to it than that. But who knows. The common sense of the European peace movement may succeed in saving the planet whereas several rounds of negotiations could not.

So there is no clear answer to the question of how much people should know about politics, or think they know. It does seem at fuzzy thinking should not rule the roost. Very few people make a distinction between politics and religion, nationalism and ideology and pragmatism and immorality. Some-

one who opposes the Israeli occupation of the West Bank should not be accused of anti-Semitism. Belief in Marxism should not be confused with a pro-Soviet orientation.

Issues should also be understood within context. If Mao said, "Power comes out of the barrel of a gun," he should not be quoted ad nauseam without understanding the circumstances in which he said it. If a government gets rid of multi-national corporations because these firms are disturbing consumption patterns, it should not be accused of acting at the behest of some foreign power.

In spite of the complexity of the issues involved, many political writers tend to sound omniscient and dogmatic. I am not offended, on the other hand, if I am described as a young woman crying out for help in a world I do not understand.

But then, I do believe that education is the process of going forward from cocksure ignorance to thoughtful uncertainty.

Manjula Saxena is a graduate student in political science and a columnist for The Daily Collegian. Her column appears on alternate Fridays.



Manjula Saxena

## opinions

### Speak up

Students, employees, and teachers of Penn State, wake up! The Daily Collegian has set aside one day for you to express your opinions on whether the University is barrier-free or if there are obstacles to those who are disabled.

Why was there so very little response? Where are the 131 students who have some disability? Are there no improvements to be made? What about you TAB's (temporarily abled bodied people)? Have you never thought about any obstacles? Do you realize that maybe someday you may be hindered from entering a building, or being able to see or hear something?

For 26 years I have felt the same, but now I am in a position where I encounter these obstacles daily. Hopefully it will not happen to you, but it is a possibility. Stop and think the next time you walk up steps.

How hard would it be on crutches? A little thought is all I ask from you, and if you come up with any ideas, please write in for the next scheduled op-ed day.

P.S. I could not even deliver this letter by myself, for the Collegian office is inaccessible for wheelchair users.

Harold Hoover, sophomore-recreation and parks  
Feb. 8

### Benefits of abortion?

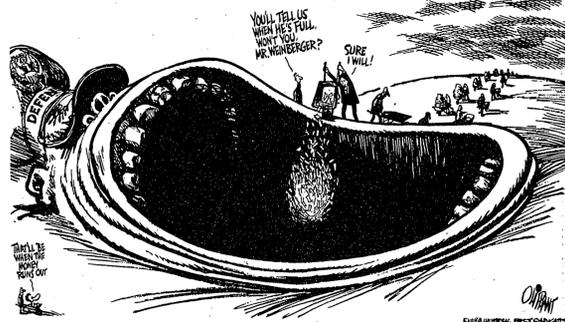
Thank you, Vickie Brown, for your insightful and enlightening letter on the benefits of abortion (reader opinion, Feb. 7).

We are so relieved to know we have someone like you who realizes how much more courageous and mature those women are who have abortions, thus erasing their silly little mistake in getting pregnant, than those cowardly girls who carry their child for nine months and then painfully give it up for adoption.

And certainly, as you say, it is more devastating to bear the child and risk the chance of becoming an alcoholic (where DO you get your facts?) than it is to be a murderer.

Finally, you are so clever in seeing what a pain those pro-lifers are. After all, what mature woman wants some silly set of morals messing up her life, just when she was getting away with everything?

Suzanne Morris, junior-English  
Kim McKeown, senior-sociology and medical anthropology  
Feb. 8



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