

editorial opinion

The real policy?

Well . . . we've got old Coke, new Coke, Classic Coke, Diet Coke, Caffeine-free Diet Coke, Caffeine-free Coke, and Cherry Coke. Which one today? Which one tomorrow? If University Faculty Senator Carolyne Schengrund, associate professor of biochemistry at Hershey Medical Center, has her way, the confusion of this question may one day be applied to the University's grading policy.

Last month, Schengrund asked the senate to consider the possibility of not implementing the plus/minus grading system scheduled to go into effect for Fall Semester, 1986.

Within the past few years, the University has been trying to improve its academic and physical stature, in order to compete with colleges and universities across the country. Because of this, many aspects of the University are changing.

The new Nittany Apartments complex on campus is replacing the old Army barracks; a new alternative meal plan has been adopted for residence hall students; General Education Requirements may replace Baccalaureate Degree Requirements in more than name only; and the Biotechnology Institute was constructed, showing that the administration wants Penn State to catch, and more importantly, surpass its competitors nationwide.

Last April 30, in keeping with the trend, the University Faculty Senate revised the current grading system with the addition of plus and minus grades.

The new policy calls for subdivisions between letter grades from "A" to "C." An A minus will equal 3.67 grade points, B plus 3.33, B minus 2.67 and C plus 2.33. The policy calls for no A plus, C minus, D plus or D minus.

After many years of debate between and among students, professors, and administrators, the University finally took a step in the right direction of giving more fair and justified grades.

Surveys were completed by students and professors; the senate's Undergraduate Instructional Committee gave an informational report to the senate last Fall; a fornic

session took place where differing opinions of the new grading policy were voiced; and finally, a vote was taken.

Schengrund said the senate voted in favor of the new plus/minus grading policy by a 58-53 vote and said only about one-half of the senators were present for the crucial vote. One reason behind the low attendance and closeness of the vote, Schengrund said, was that it was the last vote of the senate for the academic year. She said that the decision was made after an extremely long, heated debate, during which many of the senators left.

Because of the circumstances surrounding the discussion, coupled with the fact that there are 50 new senators who may not hold the same opinions as last year's senate, a revote could be very well on the way.

The senate will meet today to discuss, and possibly vote on, returning to the "old" (classic) system. But, before reaching a decision, the senate should remember that the current system, according to the completed surveys, displeased both students and professors alike. A more fair and equitable grading system was called for.

Both students and professors have waited too long for the University to decide which grading system is the best. The decision had been made, but now, only five months later, the senate may switch back to the classic system. It does not make sense to tread over the same ground as last year's senate, in order to affirm an already strongly researched and student- and faculty-supported decision.

The University should always strive to better itself, but it should not allow itself to become confused with unnecessary choices—especially after a well-researched decision has been reached.

Scene: Penn State in year 2001: "Hey Joe . . . Which grading policy do you like? The new one, the new old one, or the classic grading system?"

"At least, last year I liked the new old one, but this year I'll try the classic grading system. Maybe next year . . ."



SUPERPOWERS

the Collegian

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Gal L. Johnson
Editor

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Letters Policy: The Daily Collegian encourages comments on news coverage, editorial policy and University affairs.

opinions

The Elderly:

We forget what they've done and what they still can do

I passed the old man again today, sitting on a "class of 190," red bench in front of the Human Development Building.

The sunlight glowed over his shoulder to illuminate the pages of an unknown book that he read through thick bifocals. The transparency of his pink skin was marred only by scattered brown spots — the ones that represent old age.



Sunlight enhanced the raised veins in his hand to produce what resembled a road map. The blue veins symbolizing major highways and the tiny red ones, small country roads. They all lead to the same place. "Home is where the heart is."

He seemed entranced with his book yet, upon another look, he was aware and alert to his surroundings. Students passed, chimpanzees played and squirrels gathered and scrambled for their winter fodder. He belonged there somehow. His passive body was but a facade to the active mind that dwelled beneath a head scattered with sparse grey hair. He sat serenely on that bench as students rushed past disregarding his presence. And in his mind he was young. Turning somersaults, jumping in the Fall leaves that scattered the ground and breathing the fresh crisp air that foretold a harsh winter.

"You know that it's worth every treasure on earth to be young at heart."

In the midst of a college town where the majority are between 18- and 25-years-old, he seemed content and comfortable.

I was compelled to talk to him. To learn all the knowledge, experience and history that must have been driven home through those veins. To bridge the gap of maybe a generation or so of experiences. He sensed my stare and glanced over the top of his bifocals. I quickly lowered my head, as if against a strong wind, and walked a little faster in response to his glance. Communication is easier said than done.

Old age is probably the most frightening term in our language. There are millions of advertisements, pills, books and paraphernalia that promote "staying young." We invest in lifts of the face, thighs, eyes, breasts, buttocks and many other unmentionable parts of our sacred young bodies in the eternal search for the beauty that we believe will follow. We buy fitness books and Jane Fonda Workout videos. We eat bean sprouts and vegetable salads because carbohydrates tend to promote early death. We are a society of young people desperately trying to stay that way. However time does not stand still.

The Indians worship their old, calling them Wisemen. We, in turn, respect our elderly so much that we place them in nursing homes when they are no longer as mobile as before, or when senility sets in and our young lifestyles and 9 to 5 workdays can't accommodate them. We set them aside, forgetting how much they had brought to our lives. Forgetting that they still have much more to bring.

They say that there is a generation gap. I say that there is no such thing. We isolate ourselves from our elders by passing them off as not understanding us and the way we think. We don't give them credit for having lived under the same situations we experience now. There is no difference of challenging assignments analyzing and solving our clients' management information problems.

We don't believe that Grandpa could ever have gone out on a date, driven a car or played on a Varsity football team. We don't believe that Gram was once homecoming queen and that she met Grandpa at the Drive-In on a Saturday night.

The truth is that they have done and been in the same activities and situations as we have, we do not give them a chance to talk about their past. When they do get the chance they become like little children in the candy store, you have to tell them to get their hands out of the jars.

So many times do we avert our eyes or lower our heads when an older person walks by or notices our stare. So many times do we push them aside when life gets the least bit rough and they seem to just be another problem. Yet so many times are they there when we need them to help us solve our problems. Their wealth of information comes from experiences analogous to ours. Sometimes I wonder if they just sit back and laugh at us young ones as we run-around thinking that the weight of the world rests on our shoulders, thinking that we have all the answers. Babes in arms.

The old man still sits on that gifted, red bench. I see him every other day when my class schedule takes me to that particular part of the campus.

It's a mild Fall now and the temperature is perfect for bench sitting, and mind somersaults. There will soon be snow on the ground however and the old man might be driven indoors by the cold. I have 8 o'clock class on Monday and it takes me past that red bench. I think I'll stop and talk to the man — maybe learn something for a change.

Megan Culhane is a sophomore majoring in journalism and is a columnist for The Daily Collegian. Her column appears every Tuesday.

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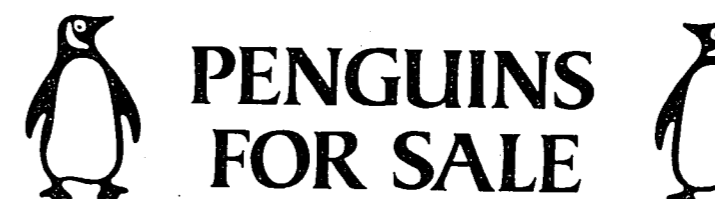
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reader opinion

Inhumanity

A very disturbing event happened at a local fraternity party late Saturday night. A student attended this party, and while there got drunk to the point of falling down. He was in a state of drunkenness so intense that the services of an ambulance were deemed necessary. The disturbing part of the story, however, was not that the student was drunk but that the fraternity brothers took him to a neighboring fraternity's lawn in order to avoid responsibility for getting him drunk.

The drunken student was picked up from the lawn and taken to the hospital by ambulance. He recovered there and was released late the next day. In analyzing this event, a certain amount of inhumanity, or even total disrespect for the life of another human being might be detected. Or might there be another reason behind this event? Could it be because that the inhumanity and compassion normally felt by these brothers was driven out by a fear of a larger, more powerful force? It appears this could be the case. The larger, more powerful force is the University's alcohol policy, and it's effects are seen everywhere. Dorn parties are conducted in secret. Tailgaters hide in their cars. Twenty-one-year-olds mysteriously disappear on Friday afternoons. The atmosphere here resembles that of Czechoslovakia in the mid-1950's. The University seems to believe that by dictating it's morals on the student body they can curb alcohol use. This has never been possible and never will be possible in a world of free thinking individuals. The only thing the University has accomplished with these policies is to cause people to take greater risks not

to get caught, resulting in possible danger to involved students. Stories like the one told here will become commonplace, and maybe the next time the victim will not be so lucky. It's time for some major rethinking of the alcohol policies here at Penn State before it is too late to do anything about it.

Fred Murray, sophomore-business
Sept. 25

To Mr. Holland,
Dear Bill,
I think you miss the point of Mr. Springsteen's work. I know you miss the spelling of Mr. Springsteen's name.

To Mr. Repsher,
Dear Bill,
Lighten up.
Glenn Taylor, senior-environmental resource management
Oct. 6

Bogus

Your story and editorial comment concerning the report of the President's Task Force on Alcohol impressed me as being quite inadequate in view of the importance of the alcohol problems in our university. There is no doubt about the fact that these problems are seriously damaging the reputation of our university and casting unfortunate reflections on the character of our graduates. As a vigorous advocate of student interests, I hope you can use the influence of your newspaper to urge the administration of the university to take positive action to reduce the abuse of alcohol at football games and fraternities and other functions.

Marsh W. White
Sept. 20

reader opinion

Thank God

Thank God we finally have someone to tell us where, when, and how much we can drink. After all, college students certainly can't make mature decisions on their own. And everyone knows that alcohol use always means alcohol abuse.

I'm really surprised that nobody thought of the proposed regulations sooner. After all, they all make so much sense. I don't know how I ever managed to pour a beer without completing a bartending course.

It's too bad the task force doesn't have recommendations for tailgating yet. Let's hope we'll see them soon.
Thank God I'm graduating.

Kevin Fischer, senior-finance
Sept. 23

Sorry!

I extend my sincere apologies to all of those who waited in vain in front of Schwab Auditorium for the performance of Harlem Heyday. There had been a notice posted earlier that explained the postponement of the show—the touring company experienced vehicle problems at Cornell—but someone, either out of malice or the mindless following of sign regulations, took down the notice.

While I cannot compensate for the physical and mental inconvenience caused to those who waited outside, you can be assured that you will not suffer any financial inconvenience.

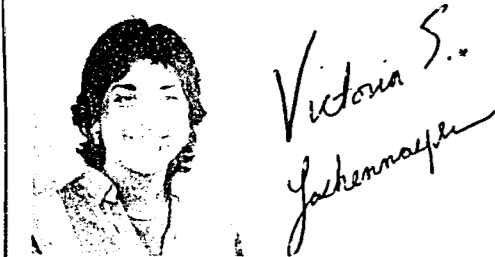
Please bring your tickets to the Paul Robeson Cultural Center for this courtesy consideration and for refund procedures.

Lawrence W. Young, Director Paul Robeson Cultural Center

Feelings:

By understanding them, can we understand our strengths, weaknesses, needs and dreams?

The harder I try, the worse I do. The more I think, the more I am confused. Each day I seem to reach towards something; I must follow my routine, I must not miss a trick, I must do. It is consistency an illusion?



For the past two years, I have been metamorphosing into a feeling-oriented person. My process began when I had the resident assistant counselor education course; it's purpose was to teach us how to express our feelings. We were graded on all of this interpersonal-feeling stuff, so I think I felt compelled to really express my thoughts.

After becoming an RA — who was only able to express my feelings well enough to receive a "B" in that class — I decided to let loose and really be conscious of feelings. My goal was to be totally in touch with my feelings and make everyone understand themselves. "Come on guys, mellow out — small the roses — slow down, stop being judgemental, and shallow. Love the world with all your heart and soul."

But as my RA experience continued, I felt

frustrated. No one was able to give up their ways and follow their real feelings. "How do you really feel?"

I decided to stop reaching to others for awhile; I withdrew into my own little world and explored and experienced life, but I never understood why I felt all alone for a good portion of my journey.

When I met people who needed love and an understanding ear, I sat ready to help them see how much they had to offer the world. "You're experiencing life, that's neat; life will work out for you."

Each time I share love, I feel myself saying, "You're good don't worry. Stay in this direction." My direction would be better for it is the ideal way to live; it's full of love and self-awareness. Love yourself and then hand it out to be so beautiful! My house thought I was a nice RA (didn't you?), but I think they thought I was out of touch with reality.

I didn't understand, all that I wanted was to give love. I just wanted to show them their goodness and help them enjoy life in the right way. Peoples' apathy towards growth and fulfillment frustrated me. What was wrong?

Well, I think I've come to a cool realization: I can't change anyone. I can't expect people to see and enjoy life the same way that I do — yes, we're all a little different and some of us are extremely different. If I accept who I am, maybe I can accept who others are and enjoy the goodness or uniqueness in them.

Those others included relationships with guys.

I would date someone and never feel they were able to relate to me. I just put up with their wants. If they acted, dressed, or thought a certain way — I bought into it all. I wanted to feel accepted and acknowledged for my good qualities. Tired of trying to be someone I wasn't, I would back off.

Did you ever see Woody Allen's movie Zelig? I felt like Zelig the cameleon — he changed according to his environment. I realized there was a part of me that this guy I was dating didn't even know. But, I thought, "What don't I know about this person?" Life was always going too fast; phone calls, snuggling, kissing, dating — I felt overwhelmed by my inability to relax.

Ding-a-ling: "Hello, No Stacey's not here now. No, I don't know where she is." Boy, that's really it. I mean, I wasn't answering the guy's phone call even when I was in the room; I wasn't answering anyone — myself included. Where's Stacey? (That's my middle name by the way.)

I've got to be perfect. Perfect — what's that mean; do I have that ability? I always think I do. I want to be thin and healthy, I want to have lots of humility and love and peace, but also an old stone house with a garden and a creek, and a BMW 2002 — creative yet organized. It's important for me to be understanding of all people, yet able to keep my distance from those who are off-base. So who am I, really? What are my strengths, my weaknesses (ouch), my needs, my dreams?

Stress, love, my career — oh golly, if I could just see into the future and get things squared away.

Since I've been at Penn State, life's been a tension between stress and play. Work, perform, do your thing.

"But what if it's not what I really want to do?" Then I've wasted money and time. Quizzes, tests, papers, speeches — maybe I'll end up with an ulcer and I won't even use this information.

Money — I'm spending so gosh darn much money; my parents' money, my money. Money that I haven't even earned yet.

Play time — I've got to have fun or I'll freak out. Going downtown is my only outlet sometimes. I'd love to go running and release my tension by getting in touch with the earth and nature, but sometimes being healthy doesn't cut it. So, I sit drinking beer, eating pretzels and chips, dancing "til one and the job is done. I'm broke, tired and giddy. God it was fun laughing, singing, and talking with friends. All of those people were releasing tension — being wild and free. Maybe this is a bad view though. Should I look forward to all of this fun that's taking place late at night? Drinking, dirty bars, loud music, it doesn't sound very conducive to good health.

Then, besides the weekend scene, where I try to relax and enjoy watching people, there's relationships and friendships. I feel compelled to help people feel happy and at peace. Why? What's my problem? That's what my friend asked me this weekend. After being confronted, I resolved that it was not a problem that I had, but a part of

me that I needed to recognize. Although I don't like to admit it, I feel it's my unwholesome that seeks to make others more whole. I fear loneliness, loss, pain, boring nights, meaningless days, sunsets unshared, moonlights overlooked. I want to give and share with others so that I know someone will share my experiences with me. Although my insecure feelings have fostered my actions, I feel that's OK. In fact it's great.

Did you ever have a burning desire to help someone solve a problem or help a friend through tough times? Stop and think about why you had this desire. Now, try and get in touch with the feelings you had. I can usually see how the situation related to my own needs and feelings. Life's a heck of an experience.

Last year I wrote: "It is hard to feel what you feel, only when you do not feel what you feel." This is where I'm at now: "It's hard for me to always know how I feel — sometimes I don't want to." As much as I want to have all of me in rhythm, I know it probably will not happen often. I'll be stressed, confused, depressed, ecstatic, high, tired, cold, analytical, and it will all be part of me. That's neat. Each feeling is real and important — life keeps going. And, the most exciting feeling for me is when I find out that you can relate to something I've shared with you. Hope you enjoy your day.

Victoria S. Lachenmayer is a senior majoring in wellness and a columnist for The Daily Collegian. Her column appears every other Tuesday.

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Fright Gallery

Starting this Thursday, Oct. 10, the Douglas Albert Gallery once again becomes the FRIGHT GALLERY! Till the end of the month, everyday and night, everything you conceivably need to be Halloween!

School of Communications

STUDENT HEARING

A hearing designed to obtain student input into the new School of Communications will be held at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 8, in Room 158 Willard. The school's Academic Program Committee is seeking student opinion on proposed course offerings, majors, etc., for the new school. All students in advertising, film, journalism, communications studies and telecommunications are urged to attend the hearing.

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