

editorial opinion

Misguided logic

He started it. After joining the University Board of Trustees in the unanimous decision not to divest Penn State's \$5.5 million in companies that operate in South Africa, President Bryce Jordan disregarded the protest outside the Faculty Building as he said, "We don't make University policy based on taking votes among the students."

Here, he was doing more than just discarding the value of student opinion. He was in fact pronouncing the question of divestment dead.

Now the newly-formed Black Student Coalition Against Racism is pronouncing Bryce Jordan dead wrong.

The coalition, comprising 13 black student organizations, has presented Jordan with a resolution promising, among other things, active opposition to the minority recruitment efforts mandated to the University.

The University's failure to divest, BSCAR argues, has made it "hard to take seriously Penn State's expressions of concern for the black students at Penn State."

Jordan responds by terming the intentions of BSCAR "misguided" and adds that "we simply plan to continue our efforts in minority recruitment because we think it's in the best interest."

Allow us to point out the profound irony in President Jordan's choice of the term "misguided" in describing the intentions of the coalition. Indeed, that adjective seems most appropriate in discussing a pattern of logic that entails recruiting minorities while investing in South Africa.

"Ignorant" runs a close second.

Instead of spending his time coming up with patronizing labels to place on the intentions of BSCAR, Jordan should realize that the gross insensitivity of his administration left Penn State's black community with no choice but to unite and act.

He should further realize that when he prematurely pronounced the death of divestment, it was he—not black students—who threw down the gauntlet.

The tremendous sacrifices that BSCAR intends to make—especially opposing minority recruitment, which would enhance the painful isolation of a community that accounts for a mere 3.7 percent of the total enrollment—should underscore the vitality of support for divestment in Happy Valley.

Groups like the Undergraduate Student Government, Graduate Student Association and Faculty Senate, as well as individual students have understood and proclaimed divestment as the only just course of action.

We support BSCAR's resolution and hope that others will support its efforts to move the University to divest fully from companies in South Africa and to promote a better environment for the black community.

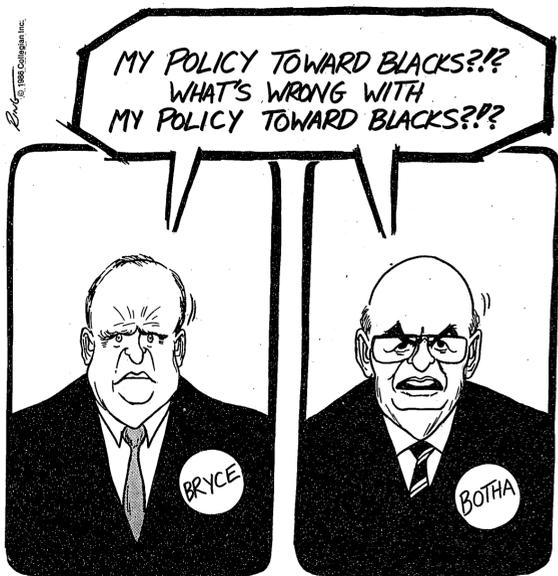
And in the meantime, we would hope above all that no one ignores the fact that the present situation here at Penn State is very grim.

On one side stands an administration that has remained coldly opposed to divestment. In the middle stands a majority of predominantly white students who have remained noticeably—and strangely—silent on the matter.

And on the other side stands a small black community who, thanks to the administration's brazen insensitivity, has been forced to resort to threats of obstructing minority recruitment in order to make its voice heard.

Should BSCAR be further forced to carry out its promise, the potential for tragedy would be manifold. But the fact is that black students simply cannot advocate enrolling at a university that refuses to acknowledge the justice of divestment.

Neither can we.



THE PATENTED RESPONSE

What do you think?

The Collegian's Board of Opinion is interested in what the Collegian's readers think and about the issues that may affect Penn State.

If you are looking for a way to voice your opinion to the University community or to those involved with the issue, why not write a letter to the editor?

Authors must present letters to the editor (one typed page, double-spaced) or forums (up to three typed pages) in the Collegian office in 128 Carnegie Building.

All submissions should be signed, include the author's phone number, academic major and status.

opinions

reader opinion

Against Gidgets

Repehr, you get a standing (even if I'm seated) ovation for "Gidget" One question: where does she come from and what can we do to stamp her out?

And, oh my God, there's 15 of them in my Accounting 101 class. Like, help man. I'm going crazy, you know?

David Gawain, freshman-accounting Jan. 29

Perhaps the students you label in a derogatory and condescending manner as apathetic are actually better informed and more understanding of the factors involved than you.

I know a good many of them who resent being lectured to, especially by tear-jerking philosophers like John Brodeur, who missed a few points in his Jan. 23 column.

John, please keep in mind that a majority of those dying in South Africa are doing so in conflicts involving only Blacks. The system of apartheid is reprehensible, but cannot be stily blamed for tribal violence or terrorist activities prompted by the Marxist African National Congress; which, by the way, strongly encourages violence in its radio broadcasts, and has mined the roads in certain black townships.

I can not be so naive as to feel guilty, because I do not support divestment, for I believe in South Africa. Moreover, if you look "closely and with honesty" at what John wrote concerning "idealists," you would detect a hint of self-righteousness, and a measure of elitism as well. Truly Afrikaner sentiments.

Coincidentally, John's lack of historical perspective is exemplified by his noting the idealism of Washington and Jefferson, both of whom found it "ideal" to own slaves. Read a book, English major.

The trustees are very much in tune with student opinion, and they realize that dismantling apartheid will be a long, difficult task for the entire population of South Africa, which can only be complicated by the possible loss of jobs that any economic sanctions might cause.

Eric Schumann, junior-accounting Carl Sestito, junior-pre-med Jan. 24

Right choice

I have an analogy for those idealistic observers of the University community's opinion concerning the divestment issue.

Suppose I favor the elimination of the Phi-Fit 500 (which I do not), and I know that at least a few other people on campus share my conviction.

Even though we feel very strongly about this, we have no right to claim that our views are held by a majority of students.

This is essentially what the few supporting divestment have done.

At a highly touted "rally" last semester, the extremely low turnout was blamed on a light afternoon rain.

Well, let's hear why, on this campus where the student opinion allegedly favors divestment, only 200 showed for the big demonstration on the day of the trustee's decision vote.

Not only did it not rain, but the weather was the nicest we've had in months.

Some turnout, considering 35,000-plus students, and a large town community.

And don't tell me about student apathy, that wouldn't coincide with the claim that there is a consensus for divestment.

It seems that I and my friend, B.R., (a Daily Collegian columnist who will remain essentially nameless), having nothing better to do, were in Room 6 of Carnegie Building, sorting through the computer system looking for worthwhile reading. (Only things written by yours truly had qualified up to this point.)

It was then that the notion of copying some of the stuff hit me.

The Collegian has a high-priced, "high-quality" printout machine in Room 6. To make it print whatever you like, all you must do is close the file of whatever it is you want copied, press "he assign," and theoretically the printer should whirl into motion, printing out what you commanded.

Needless to say, this did not happen on my first try.

Instead, a silent printer stared me down from the far wall.

B.R., who had earlier asked me to show him how to use the copier, also stared dumbly at me, but the callousness of the machine was beyond

Welcome my son:

A quest to be the-one-who-knew-how-to-use-the-machine

The delicate balance between technology and society has been the topic of much thought and discourse lately. Thousands of research dollars have been allotted to investigate it, scores of man hours are spent pondering it, and entire college courses have been assigned to it.

In light of this, it is interesting that this reporter was recently involved in an episode in which this balance was central.



Pat Collier

him. He was obviously my only friend in the room.

"What the hell...?" I said.

Something's wrong, I answered myself mentally, and checked the device letters—a row of incomprehensible babble on the upper right corner of the Video Display Terminal whose function is to alert the user when something has gone awry.

Sure enough, a flashing "H" . . .

Then it was simple. The "H" meant "halted." All I needed to do was restart the copier—a simple process.

I turned the printer off, using the big red button on the back, and turned it back on again. It was now reset, ready for action. On the VDT I pressed "he assign"—the command to reset the computer part of the printer, and was ready for action.

I opened a file I wanted copied, pressed "he assign," and, as predicted, the machine whirled into motion.

Unfortunately, there was a problem with the paper in the copier.

Specifically, it wasn't properly aligned.

The machine went nuts.

Ten minutes and three trees-worth of paper later, B.R. and I were shoveling the excess into the hall, vaguely in the direction of the janitor's room.

"Something" got messed up there, Bill," I said.

"Yep!" said Bill, a man of few words.

"Well, no biggy, all we need to do is fix the paper and try again."

After playing with the paper for 10 minutes, and finally petitioning the help of a production person from another room, the paper was ready to go.

Back to the VDT. Open a file, then "he assign" again.

Nothing.

"WHAT THE HELL?!"

B.R., to whom I was the-one-who-knew-how-to-use-the-machine, was silent.

"Check the damn device letters," I muttered to myself.

A-ha (no new music pun intended), the flashing "H" was back. All I needed was to shut the copier down and start the computer again.

I did.

"WhaaaaT da HELL?!"

(At this point, my notes become bleary. All I know is that I scratched a quarter-inch gutter in the table on which the copier sat, and it took B.R. and the production manager to drag my heaving body away from the copier. I said something like "death to machines, up with people.")

Scared and scared, but still determined to beat the printing machine, I petitioned the help of the production manager.

He gave the computer the proper commands, all the while telling me for future reference what to do, but I was oblivious. I hated the damn machine. I wanted no part of it, except to get the stuff I wanted printed done.

"Why have I wandered into Room 6?" I wondered.

When the manager had finished, I opened a file. Closed it, "he assign."

The machine whirled into action.

This time, no paper monster, no silence, just smooth, flowing hard-copy.

"Rejoice," I cried to B.R., who was smiling ear-to-ear. "Man will rule technology after all. The Revolution is safe."

I printed out more hard-copy that afternoon than anyone else on the East Coast. I printed stuff just for the fun of it.

I printed stuff about recipes and weather maps. I printed the high school sports roundup. I printed it all.

I left the room with a feeling of relief.

"Yes," I said dreamily as I left. "Man shall rule the Earth."

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the Collegian

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reader opinion

Student opinion

This letter is directed toward Presidents Jordan and Rosenblatt:

As apathy runs rampant in the ranks of the University student body, the Undergraduate Student Government and the University Administration clamor for student opinion.

Clever idea, for this will classify these institutional structures as receptive and thus better their public image.

I believe, however, that while there is a call for opinion, this call should more aptly read "White, male, upper-middle class, American, mainstream Republican opinions wanted. Submit at 203 HUB or Old Main Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m."

Based on my assumption, apathy can then only result because it, defined as the absence or lack of interest or concern, is the only thing warranted from a student population that unconsciously knows this University is racist, sexist, classist, ethnocentric and Moral Majoritarian.

Any opinion expressed running counter to the University's beliefs and practices will not be taken seriously, at best having a "committee" formed to study it, and time will be viewed as wasted.

Should students be interested in wasting time laboriously expressing opinions when they would waste it on much more pleasurable pursuits?

Beyond the "everything"-ist foundation where non-white and female faculty and administrators are near nonexistent, Blacks have to be recruited and steps taken to retain them, tuition continually increases while financial aid decreases, teachers' assistants lack proper training for them to be effective and accepted and Ronald Reagan is idolized—big issues have risen where students

Pro-choice

On Jan. 22, 1986 I am reminded again of the issue of abortion.

For many years almost everybody, including myself, has encountered a conversation on this delicate subject.

My feelings on the subject are on the Pro-choice side.

Murder, according to the dictionary, is stated as "the offense of unlawfully killing a human being." I understand human being because of the fact that the unborn entity cannot be considered a child since:

- It does not have a birth certificate.
- It does not have a social security number.
- It does not have its name registered anywhere.
- It does not have any other identification to prove that it is an independent being.

The unborn entity is still connected to the mother and, wouldn't you say, still considered a part of her.

If one sees that then one can relate to the fact that an unborn child is not a human being, but just a bunch of cells gathered together inside the woman. It will NOT be murder then. In fact, I believe lives will be saved if abortion is kept legal. If it were illegal there would be no telling what would happen.

The babies might be killed, tormented or just be unloved throughout their lives. Being unloved would be worse than death itself—I am sure you would agree.

I myself, in the past or future could not think of sending a girlfriend or wife to an abortion clinic, but I would still feel better knowing it is my decision and not the government's or court's.

I respect the Pro-life advocates' opinion on this important subject, but what I do not comprehend is why they want to lose their freedom of choice—the freedom that lets anyone be who they want to be and do what they want to do.

David Parton, freshman-business

Pro-choice

For others, it means avoiding answers when asked if they are American.

For everyone, it means trying to speak as much Italian as possible, even when over-rehearsed phrases are answered in English.

In any case, it will take time: first to adjust to customs, such as closed shops and restaurants during the afternoons, and then time to become comfortable with these customs.

Of course this isn't easy.

It is difficult to know what the lives of Roman families and students are really like, at least in terms general enough that we can adapt our individual personalities.

Though most of the American students live in "pensionis" run by families, we are out most of the day; therefore, detached from the day to day routine.

And from standing in bars or sitting in restaurants, it is nearly impossible to understand what is being said around us or to hear what is important to Italians.

Fortunately, shopkeepers and bar owners are willing and patient enough to tell us the Italian words for their products and carry

Rome:

To experience the essence of its culture, conceal the camera, speak the language and never admit being a foreigner

Beyond overwhelming, Rome is many things.

But after only two weeks, it is difficult to know exactly what these things are and what they will mean to me.

Certainly, it is things I'll never have in the United States.



Colleen Barry

columnist abroad

Here, going home means opening monstrosities, carved wooden doors, walking up a marble staircase to a room where my desk

is a wide stone windowsill overlooking an enclosed courtyard.

It is unlikely I'll ever be so centrally located in a major city—only five minutes from the Pantheon, the Spanish Steps, the Piazza Nervona, three Gucci stores and countless Benetton's.

They tell us Rome is a museum. It is doubtful I'll ever live in one of the metropolitan museums in New York City.

But there is more, in fact so much more that without a map it is difficult to identify, much more than the Saint Peter's or the Colosseum on sight.

Some of what I see is what I expected, but my expectations were little more than mazes of fountains, narrow streets, inexpensive shipping and aggressive men. And they are all here, with their details often making them, well, overwhelming.

Elaborate fountains are seemingly around every corner, the larger ones are gathering places for foreigners and Italians who come with guitars and sing Bruce Springsteen and Simon and Garfunkel songs.

The cobblestoned streets are lined with numerous boutiques selling shoes, furniture, jewelry, pottery—all much less expensive when the dollar was stronger.

Some streets are so narrow that only European compact cars can pass through. Others so crowded by cars parked on sidewalks, often doubleparked, that the cars must be lifted out of the way to allow larger vehicles to turn.

And the men very overtly turn to watch women pass, saying "bella." Or groups of men follow others down the street asking "where are you going?" or if they are English, German or French. After dark, women outside without men are almost certainly not Italian.

But these are things any tourist can see in less than a day—and certainly Rome is more than what you see.

Knowing that we will be here for four months, makes me want to take things more slowly, not only to adjust, but in some ways, to assimilate.

For some, this means keeping their cameras concealed.

on polite conversations. And often people on the street approach us to speak, but the conversations are limited.

Despite having studied eight chapters of Italian, my conversations are barely on the level of the fourth chapter, and only with those Italians who know at least as much English.

With those who speak no English, I am still on chapter one. What's your name? Where are you from? How old are you? Are you a student? What do you study?

It is some consolation to see that these conversations are becoming easier.

Also, I understand much more of what is being said around me because knowing Italians will be the difference between seeing and really experiencing. It will be the difference between having visited Rome and having lived there.

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Colleen Barry is a senior majoring in English and a columnist abroad for The Daily Collegian. This semester she is studying in Rome. Her column appears every third Thursday of the month.

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