

Editorial Opinion

Retention is the key

Recruitment is not enough; keeping minorities at PSU needs improvement

Last week, a group of black lawmakers in Pennsylvania called on state-funded colleges and universities to develop plans to boost minority recruitment or face a possible funding cut.

Penn State officials responded to the call, confidently saying that they have made "some real progress" toward increasing enrollment. And they have made some, as minority enrollment has risen 7 percent since last fall.

Recruiting in minority neighborhoods, increasing scholarships and financial aid and inviting prospective students to campus helped the University improve its diversity. But the work is not done.

While enrollment is up, keeping underrepresented students at Penn State is lacking. Administrators must address the issue of retention with the same vigor that has been given to recruitment. Only then will more minority students remain at Penn State.

University President Joab Thomas said that everything has been done to increase recruitment. But, higher enrollment figures are not valuable unless the retention numbers are just as high.

Many steps have been taken to improve the campus climate at the University, such as adding the diversity requirement. However, the climate could be better.

Building a new Paul Robeson Cultural Center would help improve retention by showing the administration's dedication to addressing the needs of underrepresented groups. Unfortunately, this project has not yet been undertaken.

The University has taken positive steps in its efforts to attract more minority students. But administrators cannot stop now. Officials must continue efforts to boost enrollment and develop more effective programs to improve retention.

OPINION THE OREGONIAN COPY BY TRIBUNE



Reader Opinion

Don't scoff at issue

The Judge Thomas/Professor Hill hearings on sexual harassment stirred debate among our peers like few issues have in the past. These proceedings have forced people to look at a societal problem that most people do not even recognize. Somewhere down the middle of the two testimonies lies the truth. The discrepancies of this particular case reflect the conflict of most sexual harassment incidents.

Sexual harassment permeates our society, but most people do not recognize it. The man throws a comment or makes a joke; the woman feels degraded or inferior. No one calls it harassment. The intention is not malicious, but the reaction is not irrational.

What starts from "harmless" jokes, "meaningless" comments and "unintentional" innuendos concerning sex and male superiority results in harassment, assault and even rape. The individual making the joke does not necessarily become the person committing the rape, but societal tolerance of such remarks reinforces, and approves the mindset that exists. Many people scoff at the sexual harassment issue, but it cannot be laid to rest until it is mitigated or solved because too many people, both men and women, are victims.

Lena L. Laaken
senior-international politics
Nicole A. Barclay
senior-music history and piano performance

Take a stand

I am one of many disenfranchised people waiting to be represented in local government. I am one of many in student government confused about where Jim Van Horn, borough council candidate, stands on the issues.

The important question for me pertains to the issue I thought Jim and I were in agreement on. The issue is fair housing for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people of State College.

My confusion stems from Jim's apparent case of political split personalities. During last year's Undergraduate Student Government election, in which Jim ran for president, he stated that he was opposed to

discrimination against gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals. He was a strong advocate for including sexual orientation into Penn State's non-discrimination policy. During the campaign Jim made an appearance before the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Student Alliance. At the meeting he not only stated his support for the non-discrimination policy, he also supported fair housing.

Since then, I have come to understand that Jim is against the Fair Housing proposal. What I don't understand is how someone can be opposed to discrimination in employment and endorse discrimination in housing? Since many of Jim's friends are gay or gay-supportive, I cannot believe that he would want them to be turned down, or worse evicted from their place of residence because of their sexual orientation.

There are some who say that Jim Van Horn has only one agenda, his own. I hope they are wrong. If you think Jim will represent your concerns remember this, if th past speaks for itself, then your issues and beliefs maybe used as a stepping stone to political office and then abandoned after election day. Please vote responsibly.

Michael LaFlam
Executive Coordinator
Underrepresented Groups USG

Art is political

This is in response to the Oct. 11 opinion column by Laura Ward. As a senior, an English major none the less, I expected a little more mature, intelligent, rational argument from Ward. To call public officials who have been elected "pinheads" and "wisdomless" is not only silly but also insulting to the people ("saps") who took the time to vote. Why not try writing to your

representatives and senators and telling them how you feel instead of calling names? Or, better yet, how about rallying support for a candidate who better represents your concerns and opinions.

I agree with the ideas that censorship is unamerican and that no person(s), certainly no government, has the right or responsibility to regulate what is "obscene." But, as an artist, philosopher, and politically active taxpayer, I see art as a personal reflective expression of life. The government should not be involved at all. That's not to say art shouldn't be political.

On the contrary, art should be as political as it is religious or emotional. If the NEA is going to give artists financial support, then why shouldn't the NEA choose on criteria it sets who can receive or not? Many non-profit organizations and private education institutions refuse to request or take government aid for the sole reason that by taking the money, they can be told how to spend or on what not to spend.

Art is something spiritual and if it is bought or traded, it should be done so because others get feeling from it. Art is not something done just to make money. Money should never be the motivation for expressing one's self artistically. Artists who can't financially support themselves on the sales of their creations should get jobs to meet the basic needs, but they shouldn't expect the government or anyone else to do this for them. Commercialism is the raping of art.

Todd A. Morgan
senior-philosophy

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123 S. Burrowes St.
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All writers must provide phone number and address for verification. Letters may be no longer than one and a half typewritten, double-spaced pages. Letters of up to three pages may be submitted as forums. The Collegian reserves the right to condense or reject submissions. Submissions become the property of Collegian Inc. Direct questions to Lisa Zollars, opinion editor, (814) 865-1828.

the Collegian

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Women should be responsible for abortion decisions

Last week, I was having lunch at the HUB with two friends. While we were eating, Jason and Missy acknowledged a flyer on the bulletin board. I looked over and was completely appalled.

It read, "Should we punish rapists by killing their children?"

I'm sorry, but the notion of killing the children as a punishment to the rapist is disgusting (not to mention offensive to rape victims). But killing the child should be an option — for the mother.

As far as the part "their child" is concerned, the rapist did not set out to impregnate the woman. The fact that the woman got pregnant is a misfortune resulting from a violent crime. The rapist's opinion is worthless because he is not a proper father or role model. He is gone. He will provide neither love nor money for this child.

The rapist has no right to influence the personal decisions of this violated woman, whose trust in men has been permanently damaged. An abortion in a rape situation in no way punishes the rapist. Forcing the victim to carry the rapist's child is to punish an innocent woman.

Some of you are probably leary of reading another column on the abortion issue. I'm just so damn tired

My Opinion

Frank Lau



of people pontificating about the whole subject. Nobody has the right to tell you how to think or act.

I am male. There it is — my basic reasoning for being pro-choice. Pretty simple.

Carrying and bearing a child is probably the most unique of all human experiences. No matter how concerned, supportive, and loving a father is during the pregnancy and birth, a man cannot fully understand the magic, pain, and emotions of a woman involved in creating a child.

Thus, someone should not have a dominant voice in controlling something he cannot understand. Regardless of his attitude toward the pregnancy, the ultimate decision lies with the woman carrying the child.

She is the one who has to struggle with mammalian, maternal instincts. She should and will have the final choice.

I don't feel or imply that a participatory father should have no input. That is my response to "what if it was your child?" The man involved (husband or boyfriend) has the right to petition the woman with his opinions because they are valid and should be heard. Showing his acceptance of responsibility and his support is an applaudable, egalitarian step.

However, let's think about that. If a woman is absolutely set on having an abortion and her boyfriend says she can't, do you honestly think she will carry that baby for nine months just to please him? No matter which way the pregnant woman chooses to go, it is she who must live with the emotional consequences of her decision for the rest of her life.

It scares me to think that the Supreme Court, especially with newly-confirmed Clarence "Long Dong Silver" Thomas, could overturn *Roe vs. Wade* this year. How can we let a court of eight men and one woman decide what all women can and cannot do with their own bodies? It's wrong ... and illogical.

"It scares me to think that the Supreme Court, especially with newly-confirmed Clarence "Long Dong Silver" Thomas, could overturn *Roe vs. Wade* this year."

Women should decide the abortion issue — not a bunch of conservative men. According to a recent *Miami Herald* column, the majority of male politicians use the abortion issue as political strategy. Many male politicians don't vote how they feel. Instead, they vote according to how they think will get them re-elected. That's sad. Men should just stay out and let women decide.

Pro-lifers cannot honestly think abortions will stop by reversing *Roe vs. Wade*. An increase of overpriced, black market abortions and unsafe self-abortion would result. The coat hanger will not only be a symbol but a reality. Many pregnant women will lose their lives in botched-up, unlicensed abortions — yeah, that really exemplifies pro-life to me.

Remember, being pro-choice does not mean pro-abortion. I think a 30-year-old yuppie woman aborting her child because it will hurt her career

is morally wrong. Abortions used as a method of convenient birth control is disturbing, too.

Abortions should be used, if the woman chooses, in cases of rape, incest, inability to care for the child, and life-threatening situations. How can a woman on welfare with several hungry children, no other family support and no job properly care for a newborn baby?

Worse yet, what about a drug abuser? Are we going to make a woman with a crack problem carry out her pregnancy? Have you ever seen a crack baby born disfigured or with no limbs? This drug abuser won't care for her child. Are you willing to take care of the thousands of deformed crack babies out there? There's not enough woman or manpower. That crack baby, if it survives, will live in constant pain and misery. What kind of life is that?

Many opponents will say that abortion is murder, but is a fetus an

actual living human being? Nobody, except God, knows for sure, but I don't think it's murder.

A friend of mine said he didn't think a fetus was a human being until it could live outside the mother's womb without the aid of extensive technology. I agree, since there have been a few documented cases of babies who were born in the latter part of the second trimester surviving without extensive life support. I also agree with the idea that an abortion should not be done after the first trimester, unless some pregnancy-related complication threatens the mother's life.

I truly think all men should be pro-choice simply because of their gender. Men should let the burden of the decision rest upon the women who will bear the children. If I make a mistake by leaving it all up to women, then I'm sorry. Then I'll have to live with the consequences of my decision for the rest of my life — just like a woman has to if she decides to have an abortion or not.

Mistake or not, I believe in the end ... God will love us all.

Frank Lau is a senior majoring in business logistics and a Thursday columnist for The Daily Collegian.