

Editorial opinion

Enhanced learning

Diversity courses teach students about life as well as careers

At a time when race relations in America seem particularly volatile with the renewal of the affirmative action debate, surfacing of reports about racist cops and harassment of minority students on this very campus, multicultural understanding is imperative.

At Penn State in 1991, the administration attempted to solve this problem by requiring all students to take a class in cultural diversity. And now University President Graham Spanier has made diversity one of his primary goals.

But recently, some concerns have been raised about the diversity requirement and its usefulness in getting people a job after they graduate.

The point of college, however, is more than just to find a job after graduation.

Without this requirement, many students would not venture into such classes and would therefore make it through college without learning the important skill of how to relate to people different from themselves.

College is about more than learning how to be an accountant, a biologist or an engineer. And it is more than just learning to use the tools of your trade.

It is about learning about life and the world you live and work in. It is about opening your mind

and challenging the way you were brought up.

Like it or not we are in a country made up of different races and different cultures. In addition, we are in a globalized community that is becoming smaller every day.

Instead of eliminating the cultural diversity requirement as some have suggested, the administration should work to strengthen those classes. The chances of actually learning something about another culture in a large lecture class are pretty slim. Small discussion groups might better serve the purpose of diversity education allowing students to share their differing views and backgrounds.

Some students also complain that it is unfair for them to have to take a class based on another culture, when, for example, a black man could take an African-American Studies course as his diversity class. They complain that the black man is not learning about another culture.

The fact is that in taking any history or literature class they have already taken a "diversity" class as it is Eurocentric to begin with.

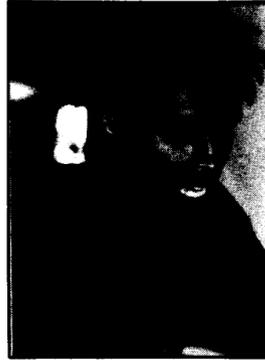
Understanding other cultures is the best way to ease the tensions that we all have in our increasingly smaller world — diversity education provides that.

Will the Million Man March have any affect on black society?



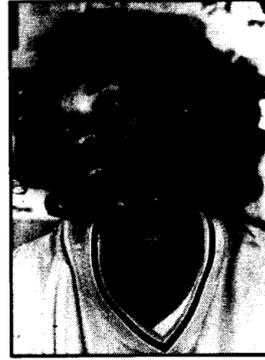
"I think it maybe would raise awareness, but I hope it would not raise any anti-Semitic views. I hope it would have more of a positive reflection on the black community."

Angela Bakowicz
senior-nursing



"Of course it will. Hopefully, the blacks that were there will come back and will reflect what they heard in their communities and it will have a positive effect."

Dawit Teklai
junior-chemical engineering



"Yeah, I think it will. I think it shows that yes we can come together peacefully for a good cause and yeah there is hope. I was really happy with the turnout despite the negative things that were said and I'd like to see that kind of thing take place in the future."

Shannon Morris
senior-political science



"No, I think those things are just pretty much symbolic. They're just symbolic gestures I guess."

Stephen Fox
sophomore-division of undergraduate studies

Letters to the editor

Wal-Mart capitalizes

As evidenced by Monday's article on big business in State College, the local struggle between small businesses and national chains is getting a lot of people concerned. These boycotting activists mix melancholy descriptions of the vacant Dank's building with cry's for choice, "we want small businesses to thrive so that we can have the freedom to choose where to shop." These hippie activists overlook the basic theory of capitalism: Whoever can offer the highest quality goods and services at the lowest price will dominate the market. A desire to dominate the market leads to competition between businesses which in turn ensures high quality and low prices. Hence, by ostracizing Wal-Mart for merely succeeding in this system, they are in fact ostracizing the very system in which Wal-Mart exists. So, by saying, "boycott Wal-Mart, so we can still have choices," they are indeed saying, "screw capitalism," a system based on choice. To this I feel obliged to say, "move to communist China, you won't find Wal-Mart there."

John Gabriel Davis
junior-agricultural science

Irresponsible company

I am writing in response to your column, "It's No Accident That Coors is the Right Beer in America." I find it horrifying that a company as large as Coors Brewery would have the audacity not to give back to society in a positive manner. It is the moral and ethical responsibility of any company which primarily exists due to benefit of their patrons to have the respect to at least uphold a code of respect. I for one work in a bar and will refuse to sell any products of Coors to anyone I serve! I also encourage anyone who is as mortified as I am over the unprofessional nature of Coors to call and voice their concern at 1-800-642-6116. Make some NOISE! To tolerate racism is to condone it!

Nancy Mahmoud
sophomore-journalism

Rude fans ruin visit

I thoroughly enjoyed my trip to Pennsylvania and State College for the Wisconsin vs. Penn State football game. Your state is very beautiful and State College is definitely one of the top three college towns in

the Big Ten. However, there was one incident that has made me lose respect for your fine university.

Late Saturday night (Sept. 30) after I and my friends had thoroughly enjoyed the town, we were leaving the Acme Pizza Co. when two female students stopped us with the now familiar line "Are you guys from Wisconsin?" I asked the one young woman if she knew where a post office box was so that I could mail my postcards of Beaver Stadium to my family. She said that she would mail them for me, because she lived very close by. After some initial hesitation on my part, I gave them to her since she assured me that she would mail them unscathed and she gave me her word as a Nittany Lion. After all, everyone else had been so friendly to us and I had no reason to think that she would break our agreement.

The postcards reached their destination with very crude comments written on them. It is one thing to write some good-natured ribbing, but it is an entirely different matter to write some of the lowest things on earth. I do not know this student's name, but she knows who she is. Please print my letter, as this is my only hope of trying to get even with her. Thank you for your help.

Jeremy Juern
Madison, Wis.

Sneering is no answer

I am writing in response to Emily Pecora's "My Opinion" column that appeared in the Oct. 17 issue. Pecora uses one fat welfare recipient and a children's story as the basis for cutting all welfare benefits and "sneering" at the poor people in this country. She goes on to say, "The fact is that no one is starving in America . . . Let them earn their keep . . . Now I only sneer." This garbage reeks of Pecora's lack of real-world experience. Obviously her only exposure to poverty or hard work has been through children's stories.

I challenge her to sneer at the 3-year-old boy who has nothing to eat because his mother traded the family's food stamps for heroin. Yes, Emily, it happens; just ask any police officer, social worker or judge.

I agree that the welfare system must be reformed. But ignoring the suffering and sneering at the impoverished are not the answers to welfare's problems.

Casey Bowers
senior-administration of justice

Law violates rights

I am in response to the editorial opinion published on Tuesday Sept. 26 concerning Megan's Law. You described how a vigilante group invaded the home of the convicted offender, dragged a man from the house and beat him severely. You went on to say that the *only* problem was that the man was not the offender but a guest in his home. The use of the word "only" implied that if the group had the "right" man, they would have had the right to do what they did. If retaliation directed at the wrongly identified person is your main reason for opposing the law, then you do not fully understand the issue at stake.

In my opinion, the main issue is that an offender, who has served his time as repayment to society for his crime could then be further persecuted, punished and/or beaten in retaliation for a debt he already paid or for a crime he may commit in the future. When anyone incurs a debt that they go on to repay, they should not expect to have to repay it for the rest of their life.

"Megan's Law" is an empty promise to the public that a crime can be stopped. We will never have a crime-free society and we never did have one. Longer sentences and "Three strikes — you're out" are also political propaganda that will only lead to more and more prisons with increasingly large geriatric wings.

Our system provides its own justice in the form of imprisonment. Homemade justice is wrong. It will never be right to encourage retaliation and vigilantism. It will never be right to deny free citizens their civil rights. Released offenders are free citizens. The constitutional problems that enactment of this law are facing are exactly the reasons these protections were created in the Constitution. I have no quick solutions for crime prevention or any that are guaranteed to work. No one has. You are right that some sort of reform is necessary. But that reform must happen within the justice system not through laws that promise what can never be delivered.

I am not unsympathetic about how to protect children. I have three children and I work hard every day to protect them.

There can never be a guarantee that they will be safe forever. However, I am not so naive as to believe that the enactment of a law will prevent it. I take responsibility for their safety myself.

Susan J. Mort
Class of '95

the Collegian

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Forcing multiculturalism increases gaps between people

Multiculturalism has led to a further dilapidation in the American educational system from our colleges down to our kindergartens. The wonderful idea, that everyone should pay respect to the many cultures this world offers, has led liberals to institute destructive policies. These policies create resentment and distract from the important skills that future workers and citizens need in the work place and the ballot box.

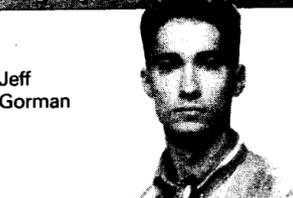
Multicultural programs such as those here at Penn State should be reexamined in light of the resentment that they create. Most of the students would rather not learn about ancient Indonesian music. If there were no diversity requirement very few would sign up for History of Nonwestern Music.

When people do not enjoy a subject they cannot be expected to learn it to the full extent of their abilities. When people do not enjoy a subject and have the full realization that this will never help them get a job, they learn even less.

Nothing is learned in these class-

My opinion

Jeff Gorman



es for as soon as the final exam is completed all the crammed info is deleted. Students only suffer through these courses because of coercive multiculturalism.

The diversity requirement was a political decision not an educational one. If we are still interested in building a University that seeks to provide a universal education we must take away the coercive diversity requirement.

Let people learn the intricacies of Indian folklore through their own elective curiosity. Some skills such as English and computer proficiency must be required. Requir-

ing the student population to take specific cultural courses that will not show any results in the workplace or in each individual's free intellectual fulfillment is foolish.

While it may be true that in the competitive world marketplace we will come into contact with other cultures, does it follow that knowing some insignificant detail about a native folk dance will give us an edge? How many Indonesian folk dances will we attend later in life?

Multiculturalism should not be over employed in our educational system for it is fragmenting society. High schools which are majority black should not overemphasize black history and touch lightly on the European contribution.

This insults the great American leaders who happened to be born black by making it appear that they only affected black society, when in fact they changed American society. The same principle should apply to all schools without regard to what race is the majority in the district.

Schools must teach the history of

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all the regions of the planet. The focus must remain on a Eurocentric history for the roots of our American civilization start there.

The liberal need to protect the culture of people immigrating into the United States has led to a coercive program of bilingual education that has grown into a \$10 billion bureaucracy. The program protects the native culture by preventing the immigrants from learning English. Students who speak English but who cannot write English are placed into classes taught in their native language.

They fall farther behind as they forget the English that they already know and speak in their native tongue. If you are of Mexican origin you are placed in the Spanish-speaking program and

only taught English 30 minutes a day. This will protect your unique culture from being lost as you are brought into American society. Bilingual education will also prevent you from learning English well enough to attain employment in the upper levels of the American economy.

Communities suffer as their educational system is destroyed through culture protecting bilingual education. Immigrants want to melt into the American society and economy. Should we teach 300 languages in our elementary and English only as a side note? Foreign languages should be taught but not at the expense of teaching English.

The United States should make English the official language and stop this foolish bilingual education

program which only hurts the people who want so much to blend into America. Is it necessary to print Spanish, Chinese, German and Polish ballots? If you do not speak English how can you make an educated decision at the ballot box? How can you drive a car?

If we continue down this road of multiculturalism the centrifugal forces that it creates will destroy American society. We will think of ourselves not as Americans but as hyphenated interlopers on the North American continent.

Minorities will continue to look to the past slights and resent the American dream as they become further isolated, pulling away from American society. All of America will resent the fact that liberal multiculturalism forces bad educational policies and creates rifts in society. We should not be a society of separate groups, but of independent individuals.

Jeff Gorman is a senior majoring in economics and political science and a Collegian columnist.