

# HUB cashiers take customer service course

*A recent incident prompted HUB Eateries' management to make its employees undergo a course on how to be more courteous with customers.*

By JENNIFER REITZ  
Collegian Staff Writer

In response to comments from minority students at a recent workshop, HUB Eateries' management held a refresher course in customer service.

Karen Jackson, assistant accountant for the Eateries, said she periodically retrains employees in certain areas and was prompted to hold a course in customer service in response to an article in The Daily Collegian last week.

The article reported that at a workshop sponsored by Project Growth, several black students said they were treated rudely at the Penn State Bookstore on Campus and at the HUB Eateries. Students complained that their ID's were slapped on the counter rather than handed back to them and that cashiers were rude to them.

Tia Gaines (senior-health educa-

tion) said she has seen discrimination from cashiers in the HUB and at the dining commons in East Halls. She said some have been rude to her friends and have even thrown things.

"People don't want to be bothered with you," she said.

Gaines said she thinks the retraining was appropriate, but she said if the situation were reversed and black cashiers were rude to white patrons a different corrective alternative would have been taken.

"If it had been me behind the counter, I'd have been fired a whole heck of a long time ago," she said.

Jackson and Dave Gingher, assistant director of food services, said the Eateries has never received any complaints that minority students were unfairly treated, but if there was even a hint of a problem, they wanted to alleviate it immediately.

Jackson said she realizes most employees of the HUB are students and get bogged down with exams, but they must remember to serve all customers.

"We responded because we promote customer service to all our customers," Jackson said. "There



Collegian Photo/Michael L. Palmieri

Randi Goldberg (junior-marketing and international business) greets a customer yesterday afternoon. This is Goldberg's first semester as a cashier at Dough To Go in the HUB.

are no differences. Whoever they are, they are equal opportunity spenders."

David Solis, a cashier in the Celar, said the retraining was definitely necessary. He said he sometimes is a customer at the Eateries and is not always satisfied with the service he receives.

"(The workers) are not responding to the customers needs — not smiling, not being friendly," he said.

Gretchen Leffler (sophomore-nutrition) said she never noticed discrimination but did not really look for it.

"If I had noticed it, I would have made a conscious effort not to come back," she said.

Leffler said she has always been satisfied with service at HUB.

Rita Evans (sophomore-psychology) said she does not think the HUB cashiers are as discriminatory as other places on campus, but

she thinks a retraining course could only be beneficial.

Cashiers need to start thinking of customers as patrons rather than just students.

Solis said better customer service is needed for all customers and the training was not presented as just for minority customers.

Jackson said she did not mention the article during training but just stressed the importance of good, equal service to all HUB Eateries customers.

Janel Giovannelli, who works at the Eateries but seldom has contact with customers, said her co-workers saw the article and realized the comments played a part in the retraining. She said she has never seen discrimination from cashiers, but she does not completely doubt the validity of the complaints.

"I would hope it wouldn't happen," she said. "But I guess anything could be possible."

# Sorority members discuss their image

By JULIE M. RANDALL  
Collegian Staff Writer

To some students, the word sorority is associated with drinking and nonstop partying, due to vintage "Animal House" footage, but Panhellenic members who met last Monday night said this inaccurate image needs to be replaced with images that focus on the positive aspects of sorority life.

"I think (sororities) are portrayed as very airheaded and that's not true about what they are," said Elise Gombos, a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority, 10 Wolf.

Frustrated with their portrayal by the media and shows such as "Beverly Hills, 90210," Panhellenic members discussed improvement of sorority images in the press.

Ahren Astudillo, vice president of membership, said sororities need to be careful of the impressions they give the media.

"Sometimes we have to refocus on how we want to be portrayed; our image needs to be refocused," Astudillo said. "We want to be seen for the positive aspects of the Greek system."

These negative portrayals in the media lead to negative impressions of the Greek system by non-Greeks.

"It seems atypical — the fraternity house scene with the parties and sororities going over and it just seems like a big hook-up scene," said Jeanne Stancampiano (junior-political science).

Astudillo had council members pretend to be parents, faculty, business owners and independent students to have an outside perspective on how sororities present themselves in the media.

Kati Wiggins, president of the Panhellenic Council, said sororities feel the effects of negative portrayal when it comes to attracting new members, citing The Daily Collegian article which focused on sororities fighting for position on College Avenue to watch the Homecoming Parade.

"For instance, we seem really catty, and I think that's wrong. In most cases, we work together," Wiggins said.

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— Ahren Astudillo  
Panhellenic vice president of membership

Todd Pullman said incidents such as the one mentioned by Wiggins cause sororities to be seen as snobby.

"They're perceived as snobs," said Pullman (junior-real estate and international business). "They keep to themselves and they keep their noses up in the air."

Astudillo said in the minds of those outside the Greek system, these negative perceptions are unfairly overshadowing all the good things sororities do.

Leigh Flusser, a member of Sigma Delta Tau sorority, 1 Shulze, who was present for Astudillo's presentation, said the discussion raised her awareness of how sororities sometimes look in the eyes of non-Greeks.

"It definitely should be cleaner — you don't want people to think that all we do is party," said Flusser (junior-human development and family studies).

Wiggins reiterated Astudillo's point that sororities need to carefully watch their actions.

"The point is to re-examine things we're doing and the message that it sends," Wiggins said.

Those present for the meeting were also instructed on how to deal with the media to avoid misunderstandings. Astudillo said sororities should be concise and watch tone and inflection when talking to members of the press to avoid being misunderstood.

Astudillo stressed people cannot always blame the media for the way things are portrayed.

"We're represented in the paper and we have to be careful of how we're represented," she added.

# Reported hate crimes decline in 1994

By MICHAEL J. SNIFFEN  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Hate crimes reported to police declined in 1994, with the number of murders dropping from 20 to 13, the FBI said yesterday.

The bureau said 5,852 hate crime incidents were reported during 1994, compared with 7,684 incidents in 1993.

The 1994 figures are slightly more comprehensive than those gathered in 1993. In 1994,

the FBI got hate crime data from 7,298 law enforcement agencies, which were responsible for 58 percent of the U.S. population. The figures the previous year came from 6,850 law enforcement agencies covering 56 percent of the population.

A 1990 law requires the FBI to compile the annual report but merely encourages local police agencies to volunteer hate crime data to the bureau.

As before, racial bias was the most frequent motivation for hate crime, accounting for 60

percent of the incidents in 1994. Religious bias was behind 18 percent of the incidents. Bias against homosexuals, mostly men, accounted for 12 percent of the incidents. The remainder stemmed from bias against national origin or ethnic background.

Crimes against people accounted for 72 percent of hate crime offenses. The rest were directed against property.

The two most frequent criminal acts were intimidation at 39 percent, followed by vandalism and property destruction at 24 percent.

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