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OUR OPINION

Rising professor pay needed to keep them in PSU classrooms

Penn State, in concurrence with other Big Ten universities, has started to pay its professors more money. The amount of money professors earn depends on the college for which they work; those who work in the Smeal College of Business get paid more than those who work in the College of Arts and Architecture, sometimes by as much as \$70,000.

Paying more money to retain the best and brightest faculty seems like a small price when one considers the merits of a good education. And a good education requires renowned faculty.

Renowned faculty members aren't going to stick around if their pay isn't comparable to other schools.

If higher salaries are needed to maintain Penn State's name, then so be it.

Once a university gets a reputation for poor-quality programs, which are a reflection of the faculty, a university becomes unable to attract the best and brightest of students.

This also affects the quality of faculty members the university is able to hire.

Who wants to work for a university that is not held in high regards by the academic community?

Once a reputation of ill repute begins, the vicious cycle is hard to stymie. But it seems more pay will help to maintain Penn State's name.

With the addition of a new forensic science major, for example, Penn State will most likely have to offer extremely competitive pay to attract professors from other universities that already have such a program. For the program to become lucrative and to gain reputable attention from would-be students, it's going to have to quickly build its repertoire of professors. And fast.

Let's face it — the quality of the institution starts with the quality of the teaching staff. And healthy competition between universities is good as long as it will help promote the production of a quality product — an education worth every penny of our tuition.

However, it is imperative that the university refrain from embarking upon a salary-arms race in the manner of "we'll see Ohio State's 4 percent increase and raise it 3 more percent."

In all likelihood, our professors could be traveling around the world, conducting research or working at extremely profitable businesses in the city.

Instead, they choose to teach college students who often profess to know everything they'll need to know for the rest of their lives.

It is incumbent upon the university to make it worthwhile for professors in all colleges to impart their knowledge with us so we can function in the real world one day, too.

Who we are

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OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Women's rights issue requires more work

Responding to Ms. Kopacz's column, I believe wholeheartedly that women should not settle for current standards of so-called social equality ("Equality for women has come far in short time," March 18). Today, women face a monumental task of rectifying centuries of injustice and imprisoning roles forced upon them through a world that defines "masculinity" as power or authority.

Advertisers remain steadfast with degrading sales techniques that patronize women's empowerment.

Images are sold within film, television and magazines that suggest recognition of equal status is result of silence and the glorification of sexual openness.

Perhaps the most frightening aspect of the media's deterrence exists in the classroom environment. At an early age, girls face dangerous reinforcement that silence results in power.

A 1999 study at the University of Michigan found that girls in preschool are told to be quiet more frequently than boys are. Throughout early grade school, girls continue to receive this encouragement to be restrained. Later in life, a mentality of acceptance for current media messages with social constraint appears. Unbelievably, this

has been going on since the 1950s. As a man, I think it's important to realize the surviving problems of a male-dominated society. Acknowledging these inequalities is the first step in removing them.

To all the women on campus: allow Women's History Month to become a yearlong celebration. Rather than simply remembering past milestones, continue to make new ones.

Dan Trout  
sophomore-journalism and history

Speaking on behalf of God is a mistake

After reading Gary Morella's letter to the editor ("Opposing gay people not act of hatred," March 17), I felt my stomach drop to my feet because I found I was ashamed of being a Christian and infuriated at this faceless man lecturing me through the paper.

Mr. Morella, have you met God? Have you sat down and talked to Him over coffee at Starbucks?

I think not, and therefore you have no right to talk about what God thinks about homosexuality. I was born and raised in a Christian family and I was taught that God is our Father and is therefore a powerful, but loving entity. To compare homosexuality to alcoholism is ridiculous because being gay is not some debilitating problem and most definitely is not a crime.

Mr. Morella cites several passages from the Bible, but all of them are in relation to excessive lust and perversion. One can not use such a gross over-generalization of one lifestyle to label an entire group of people because it is such a blatant stereotype and as such, useless as "proof."

Finding someone who loves you for who you are is not a sin, and therefore does not deserve "saving."

I do not have the Bible memorized; however, in my limited understanding, God is more than the rattling off of books and passage numbers.

I would think that if Mr. Morella really understood God as much as he lets on, he would know this. It only seems logical to believe that humans, being only imitations of Him, can not begin to comprehend His doings and thoughts and therefore can only give a biased and often one-sided view of His words. The only way any of us will "know" God and what He thinks is when we go meet Him for ourselves.

Brittany Billingsley  
freshman-East Asian studies

MLK day is not just another drinking day

Mr. Skurko is a freshman, so he may be ignorant about what goes on around campus each year ("Administration must make East-

er day off," March 18). I am not going to argue the idea of having Easter Sunday off versus Martin Luther King Day off, nor the possibility that the MLK statue may be a small band aid that the administration is trying to apply to a larger problem.

I simply wish to impart some additional information. Mr. Skurko, Martin Luther King Day does not solely give students an opportunity to "booze up" another night. I've been on this campus since 1999, and every year I've seen stories and pictures in the newspapers distributed around campus about people performing community service in honor of that day, that man and that ideal.

A lot of people take the opportunity to do volunteer work either in this area or at their homes. So, please check your facts before making your argument.

And, if we ever get the Monday after Easter off, I'll go out drinking in your honor.

Joseph Firantello  
graduate-architectural engineering

Opinion correction

Gary Morella's letter, "Opposing gay people is not act of hatred," that ran on Thursday's opinion page incorrectly identified his title. He is a research assistant.

COLUMNIST

Feminism should not trump academia or logic

By Lauren Warner

FEMINISM holds the ability to alienate men, naturally, but sometimes, even women.



MY OPINION

When I ran into one of my professors outside of class, I asked if she had read Ayn Rand. I had asked because Rand's first novel was actually very complementary to the revolution we study in class. She acknowledged familiarity with the name. Then she smirked. "Isn't that the book with the rape scene," she queried, shaking her head.

She referred to a different novel written by the same author, which I had not intended to discuss. But that book, too, is fascinating. Complex characters, a gripping story spanning 694 pages, a triumphant, philosophical conclusion — but she fixated on this particular scene.

For the first time, I saw this intelligent, extremely capable woman articulate words that were emotionally driven and irrational.

The alleged rape? As the author herself had eloquently put it, it was a scene depicting "spiritual strength and self-confidence, not physical violence." It was a passionate love scene that established the romantic affair between the hero and the heroine.

The book is *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand. The hero is pursued by the beautiful, powerful Dominique for a length of time

before the two consummate their attraction. It is the author's deliberate intention to establish this love affair with an explosive tone. The characters manipulate the encounter to fit their desires. They are playing, and the encounter symbolizes their entire relationship.

After the scene, Rand writes, "She knew that she wanted to keep the feeling of his body, the traces of his body on hers, knowing also what such a desire implied." Not rape. It is a sexual encounter between two consenting adults, both very much thrilled by the conquest.

But this passes through a feminist filter as sexual violence. Because women are doomed to a lifetime of oppression, I suppose. I hate the concept of sexual violence as much as the next girl, but let's not allow irrationality to dominate a scholarly discussion.

Because, it was this irrationality which left me standing, dumbfounded, in front of one of the most knowledgeable, respectable professors of my academic career, who dismissed the entire work on one alleged rape scene.

Of all sectors of our society, academia should be the last to engage in this type of reactionary behavior. Our professors, ideally, would be paid to step back and intellectually use the academic license.

Not to write off a critically acclaimed author for one misinterpreted scene.

Whether or not my professor is actually feminist is irrelevant. But it definitely got me thinking about what the many goals of the many schools feminism are. There are several schools of feminism. Liber-

al feminism challenges traditional sex roles.

Conservative feminists, however, do not oppose the traditional, nurturing role of women. Radical feminists have an affinity for identifying patriarchy and attempt to dismantle the oppression which, they argue, is fundamental to capitalism.

Feminism began with women suffragists, continuing on to challenge traditional sex roles. Feminists have undoubtedly earned their place in history, righteously fighting for civil rights, birth control rights. And some argue that some reform remains.

So obviously, "feminism" is not a catch-all for those whose agenda calls for the empowerment of women; feminists are prone to disagree with one another.

Some advice for all feminists — agree to find, and honor, rationality. Don't allow radicalism to eat away the substance of an argument.

We have to acknowledge our progress, I think, without using tactics such as affirmative action. It's an issue of social, not political nature, yet some argue differently. I don't believe radical feminism to belong in the political arena.

So one argument is that there aren't enough female lawmakers?

A quick Internet search brought up that 6 percent of Cabinet members have been women. A fraction of Congress is female.

In the Supreme Court, women have comprised an even tinier portion. Roughly 20 percent of federal judges are female. And women comprise about a tenth of the nation's governors. Anyone would agree these numbers to be low. But who has the nerve to honestly

ask the most basic, fundamental question: What is stopping women from running for office?

In my opinion, it's more to do with women themselves than any oppressive patriarchal system. No one is preventing women from pursuing government positions. No one, that is, except women themselves. Has anyone heard Condeleza Rice whine about how difficult her career achievements have been?

Let's examine a stunning fault in the nationally covered case of Brian Nichols. A former linebacker, his handcuffs were dismantled by a tiny, female deputy nearly 20 years his senior.

He overpowered her, took her keys and obtained a gun. In the following hours, he killed several people, took several hostages and pulled off several jackknives. Sometimes it seems that empowerment is misused, holding the potential to cause more damage than good. I would submit the Nichols incident as proof.

Feminism has been a positive force in our society for decades; it seems that these "founding mothers," if you will, got the ball rolling, and now it's rolling out of control. Feminism shouldn't trump intellectual discourse.

The search for real solutions to real problems is on, and we need to rediscover extremely practical decision making about how to maintain safety in a courtroom.

There's feminism. There is politically correct feminism. And then there's stupidity.

Lauren Warner is a senior majoring in political science and a Collegian columnist. Her e-mail is law149@psu.edu.