

Letters to the Editor

Dean Reber clarifies sanctions against Sig Tau's

Dear Editor,

I would like to respond to a letter written by Ala Stanford which appeared in the February 7, 1990 issue.

In her letter, Ala described an incident during a recent Erie Panthers hockey game at the Erie Civic Center which involved some members of the Sigma Tau Gamma fraternity. I concur with Ala's condemnation of the participation of fourteen fraternity members in an insensitive chant directed at a black player on the opposing team. The chant was widespread throughout the Civic Center that evening.

In her letter, Ala expressed concern regarding her perceived lack of administrative response to the incident. In fact, I wish to clarify that we did respond immediately.

As soon as I learned that some members of the fraternity had allegedly participated in the chant, I met with the fraternity's vice president who happened to be available and in the vicinity of my office. I asked for a written report on the incident from the fraternity within twenty-four hours. I also said that I would conduct my own investigation and that it would be in the fraternity's best interest to present a complete and truthful rendering of facts.

We agreed to convene a meeting of the fraternity's executive board the following evening. Dave Shields, Assistant Dean of Students, and I attended the meeting.

The executive board admitted that fourteen fraternity members had participated in the chant, and gave me a list of the names of those students. (It should be noted that all members of the fraternity were not present at the game, and that many of those present claim not to have

participated in the chant. In fact, some members claim to have urged those who were chanting to stop.)

The fraternity vowed to take responsibility for the incident through a five-point plan designed to raise sensitivity levels of present and future members. After the meeting, I sent the following letter, dated January 23, 1990 to the fraternity:

I should like to take this opportunity to respond formally to the admission that fourteen brothers of Sigma Tau Gamma participated in an insensitive chant at a recent hockey game at the Erie Civic Center. As you know, I was very disappointed to learn about the incident.

While I understand that the chanting in question was widespread throughout the Civic Center, I expect a great deal more of Penn State-Behrend students. In fact, I would expect a great deal more of many children.

Using words which connote feelings of animosity toward or which belittle others on the basis of their race or affiliation with a group is both insensitive and is evidence of the most narrow thinking.

People are often hurt by such words. I hope that the brothers of Sigma Tau Gamma have learned something from this incident, and I trust that there will be no further incidents of this nature.

As you know, our University is deeply committed to creating an

environment which supports and welcomes diversity. We want all members of our University community to appreciate and learn from one another -- from our varied life experiences and points of view.

President Jordan recently said that this is the highest priority of the University, and that all of us must share in the responsibility to create an environment which welcomes differences.

I am pleased with the plan that you and your colleagues have articulated for increasing the sensitivity levels of Sigma Tau Gamma brothers. I should like to formalize our acceptance of that plan. My understanding is that Sigma Tau Gamma will do the following:

1. Your fraternity will write a letter of apology to Dr. Robert Hendrickson, and a second letter to Penn State-Behrend. Further, I should like to ask that you write a letter of apology to the Knoxville player who was attacked verbally.

2. Sigma Tau Gamma will implement an immediate awareness program for the fraternity. We discussed showing a videotape of a recent open forum on racism, with discussion to follow.

3. Sigma Tau Gamma will require all brothers and pledges to attend the upcoming (February 1) Benjamin Hooks lecture, with discussion to follow.

4. Your colony will invite a speaker to talk to the membership this

semester about Penn State's diversity efforts.

5. Sigma Tau Gamma will implement an annual diversity program as part of your new member pledge program. This will ensure continuity in your efforts to sensitize brothers to our diversity objectives.

David Shields and I are here to help you. Further, David will monitor your progress and will communicate with the national office regarding their role.

As indicated earlier, I will be convening the student organization hearing board to consider further disciplinary action that might be taken against the fraternity. I do not expect that any individuals will be referred to our discipline system.

Should you have any questions regarding the above, or if I am in error on any of these points, please see me at your earliest convenience. If I do not hear from you by January 30, 1990, I will assume that you are in agreement with all of the above. I look forward to the active participation of Sigma Tau Gamma in Penn State-Behrend's efforts to realize our diversity objectives.

Although the behavior of the students involved is repulsive and contradicts directly those principles for which our College and University stand, the individual students involved cannot be referred to the University discipline system. The actions occurred off of University property, and they are protected

under the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution (freedom of speech).

The student organization hearing board, comprised of eight students appointed annually by SGA, did meet to consider possible sanctions against the fraternity.

The decision of the board was to send a letter of condemnation to the fraternity, and to endorse the plan articulated by the fraternity since it is positive, action-oriented, and will ensure future efforts to promote sensitivity. There are no administrators or faculty members on the student organization hearing board.

Consistent with the confidentiality afforded individual students who are referred to the University discipline system -- confidentiality mandated by law -- it has been our practice to exercise the same confidentiality in the process of adjudicating grievances filed against student organizations.

We are now considering possible future publication of the results of student organization hearing board investigations and hearings.

I want to emphasize that an allegations of inappropriate behavior on our campus by individuals or groups are investigated and, when substantiated, they are addressed within the boundaries of University policy and the law.

I would be happy to discuss any of these issues further. I have met with concerned students to discuss this incident. Further, my office is arranging a meeting for all those concerned with the fraternity leadership.

Sincerely,

Chris Reber
Dean of Students

Student Senator comments on parking lot problems

Urges commuters to voice opinions if wrongfully ticketed

Dear Editor,

I have been a commuter student here at Behrend for the past three years. Within these three years I've played a cat and mouse game with Police and Safety, while trying to visit friends in the dorms.

According to the official Penn State Erie brochure on Student Parking the "Staff Parking Lot" is designated as such:

I. General Provisions Definitions Section F

Staff Parking Lot shall mean those parking areas that are restricted for use by Faculty/Staff

members only, from 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM unless otherwise noted.

Staff Parking Lots are defined in the Brochure as well, in five different locations on the campus. The farthest faculty staff parking lot is next to the Maintenance Building next to the apartments, and so it presents no applicable commuter parking spots.

The other four, however are well suited for commuter parking. There are approximately 20 plus spaces behind Lawrence. There are at least three faculty spaces behind Niagara, and approximately five behind Perry.

That represents 27 faculty and staff reserved parking spots out of

only three lots. That number also does not include the 15 minute loading zone spaces. With the enormous number of spots available, I personally cannot see the reason these spaces are guarded so ruthlessly.

The time has come for commuters to speak out. Those commuters who feel they have been wrongfully ticketed for parking in staff/faculty spots, fight the ticket, make your voices heard. I know I will be doing my share of noise making during the next SGA meeting.

Lorenzo Paul
Commuter Senator
5th semester junior

Sigma Kappa Nu rebuts facts about raid

Dear Editor,

After reading your article, "Frat House Raided", we were appalled by the shoddy journalism displayed by Collegian editor/reporter Mark Owens. We realize that the reporter was doing his best to write the article, and we are not saying we could do any better; but we desire to state the facts and give this journalist some hints in reporting techniques.

Let's begin with the headline-"Frat House Raided." Sigma Kappa Nu is not a frat, we are a fraternity. Mr. Owens, call your...club, a frat, if you wish. Refer to Sigma Kappa Nu as a

fraternity.

A mixer is a gathering between a fraternity and a sorority. The party in question was a combine between two fraternal organizations.

Here are some more facts you neglected to uncover, or falsely reported:

- The address of the Skin House is 3801 Shannon Road, not Cooper Road.

- The police arrived at 11:30 p.m. not 10:30 p.m.

- There were 200 people at the combine.

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