

VIEWPOINTS

The Gamecock

Serving USC Since 1908

J.T. Wagenheim, Editor in Chief • Shayla Stutts, Viewpoints Editor

EDITORIAL BOARD

Jay King, Gordon Mantler, Rob Rodusky,
Lee Clontz, Carson Henderson

Love in academia

Faculty-student affairs could undermine purpose of higher education

The recent furor at the University of Massachusetts over comments made by a professor about relationships with students highlights an issue every college and university must examine.

The English professor made comments to the effect that male faculty could help female students lose their virginity. While this is perhaps an extreme example of how professors are handling decisions about faculty-student relationships, it provides an opportunity to open debate on the subject.

There has also been a similar debate at the University of Virginia. Few other areas of our lives are held more sacrosanct than the conduct of our personal relations, but often because of those relations, we find ourselves in tumultuous emotional imbrolios where our normally rational minds seem to slip out of gear.

Control of personal lives isn't the reason behind applying some restrictions. Rather, professor-student dating distracts young students in the midst of preparation for the real world. Even more crucial, however, is that a professor's, and the university's, goal of higher education not be undermined by personal interests. If a student becomes involved with a professor, the student's grades are at stake, and other necessities such as recommendations fall prey to bias.

Two people engaged in the learning process by day and dating and romance by night are two powerful, yet completely incompatible forces. There isn't enough room for both activities within a successful educational plan.

Who is to say with certainty in every instance when a professor becomes involved with a student what the consequences will be? Surely, no individual is competent to do so, but as a college community — a microcosm of society as it were — we must take up the debate.

The USC Faculty Senate took up the debate this spring and has proposed a policy that will prohibit consensual relationships between a professor and student "under their direction, supervision or control."

The new policy would replace older guidelines that did not expressly forbid such relationships; however, it does not address whether faculty and students can have relationships outside the classroom. In fact, the policy wisely sidesteps the issue with its silence.

Professor-student relationships cannot be monitored any closer at a university than employer-employee or doctor-patient relationships. What this policy can do is enlighten the academic community to the importance of placing education above all else. The pending USC policy on consensual relationships states that, to cure the violation, teaching duties of the instructor may be reassigned; the same action may occur with the student's assigned class. If the two refuse to end the relationship, expulsion of the student or termination of the instructor may result.

To prevent unethical behavior is tantamount; unfortunately, the idea of such a policy seems Puritanical. However, if enacted, it will in fact weed out the professor who cares little of intellectual development and prevent further exploitation of the students.

Athletics Dept. at fault if Homecoming fails

In a flurry of school spirit, this year's Homecoming Commission has reinstated the Homecoming Parade, which will join Cockfest and the half-time awards as USC's post-queen Homecoming celebration.

However, you probably won't be able to participate. At least, you won't if you have any desire to go home for fall break.

That's right, folks, all the Homecoming hype may be worthless for you because most of it takes place over one of the two weekends this semester coupled with days off from classes.

Out-of-staters and lots of in-staters will go home; that means they will not be at Homecoming.

In other words, the money spent to bring James Gregory to Cockfest will be largely thrown away.

The half-time awards? A large portion of the student body will miss them.

Students could stay until Saturday, but for most of them, the four-day weekend is the only opportunity to go home. Given the choice between Homecoming and actually going home, most students will choose the latter.

It's ironic, isn't it? Most of the student body will be at home for Homecoming.

I don't blame the Homecoming Commission in the slightest. Certainly, the decision for the Homecoming game to fall Oct. 9 did not lie with them.

Rather, I ask the Athletics Department exactly what it was thinking when it decided when Homecoming would be.

I would imagine the decision was made because we are favored to beat East Carolina. It would be a shame to have hordes of alumni in town and



Lee Clontz

for us to get defeated, wouldn't it?

But if that's the rationale for deciding Homecoming, then what's the use? Why have parades? Why have Cockfest? Why bother?

Homecoming has experienced some slim years in the time since the abolishment of the Homecoming Queen. The Homecoming Dance has rarely seen more than a hundred people, and many of the events have had slim attendance.

This year, the Homecoming Commission is trying its best to do something right, to have some events that students want to go to and that might actually draw crowds.

Except, the crowds simply won't be here. And who would expect them to be? Especially for new students, this may be the first chance they have to go home. A weekend isn't always long enough, but four days may be.

All of which leaves us with three choices for next year: move Homecoming, move fall break, which would let us share a break with Clemson, or just forget about Homecoming all together.

After all, I know I'll be home for Homecoming.

Lee Clontz is Carolina! editor for The Gamecock. His column appears every other Friday.

USC VOICES

Should professors have outside relationships with students?



"Well, I don't know the American system. I am from Japan. In our country's case, yes. It is a good way to study and make friends."

Haluka Ida
EPI



"I don't think so. I think [relationships] should stay in the classroom."

James Goldwire
Computer science
sophomore



"Yes. It's their choice. They have the right if they want to."

Anitra Frederick
Nursing sophomore



"No. It presents a bad image. It makes the professor and students look cheesy. It's not appropriate."

Jason Stack
Biology senior

CROSSFIRE

Could NAFTA improve economy, human condition?

PRO By Ryan Atkinson

The odd coalition that has formed to combat the North American Free Trade Agreement epitomizes the fear and ignorance that has surrounded the issue of free trade for centuries. The first order of business is to put a gag on Ross Perot. Perot, who started as an amusing walking caricature, has become an irritating rhetorical demagogue. Also, someone needs to tell Pat Buchanan he is taking his isolationist principles a step too far. And of course, Richard Gephardt and Jerry Brown are as far out in left field as usual. Although these are the political leaders of the coalition, the actual power comes from the backing of big labor unions such as the AFL-CIO.

Now let's look at what the effects of this agreement will actually be. First of all, tariffs would be removed on items traded between the U.S., Mexico and Canada. Unions are afraid they will not be able to compete with products from Mexico if their prices are not artificially inflated by tariffs. The cheaper labor available in Mexico allows them to have lower costs of production. Anti-NAFTA forces believe this will lead more U.S. businesses to migrate south. To understand why this is not so, we need to delve into the free trade issue a little further.

While the prices of Mexican goods may be cheaper initially, the rise in their standard of living that will result from a freer market would eventually raise Mexico's wage scale to compensate for inequities. This fact escapes many in the anti-NAFTA ranks because their primary fear is competition. Coupled with the rhetoric of Ross Perot and others, the coalition has become very formidable.

The real issue here is not about nationalism; it's about standards of living. Free trade is nothing more than a free market without national boundaries. Just like any other free market, it has the capacity to increase the amount of products available, lower prices, create jobs and consequently raise standards of living. The long-term effects of NAFTA will have a stimulating affect on the entire continent. However, if we continue to let fear dictate our actions, we may never see the ramifications of free trade.

Ryan Atkinson is a regular contributor to Crossfire.

CON By Patrick Sharbaugh

I don't presume to claim to know the indisputable outcome of NAFTA's implementation. That would be ridiculous. The issue is incomprehensibly complex, but it is subject to the interpretive fancy of thousands of would-be economists each day. I do know that I oppose it for a reason that, sadly, hasn't garnered much press attention to date: Mexico's abominable human rights record.

For those of you who aren't aware of it, Mexico is a one-party system; that is, it hasn't seen a free election in years. Human rights groups have documented countless abuses in the country, from systematic torture by law enforcement agents to detainment of whole villages while their homes are searched.

The U.N. Committee Against Torture has asserted that the Mexican government tolerates and proscribes regular torture of its citizens. Even the State Department's annual human rights report cites flagrant assaults on free expression, assassination of peasant activists and regular intimidation of labor groups. Yet, this is where some wish to send U.S. industries to set up shop.

As Sen. Ernest Hollings has pointed out, when the democratic nations of the European community admitted Spain, Portugal and Greece into its free trade pact in the '70s, it first required that the countries move to a system of free and fair elections and agree to minimum standards for wages, worker safety and environmental impact.

NAFTA proponents have no such plans for Mexico, however, and seem only too willing to plop U.S. workers down in a political situation where Mexican environmental advocates, labor union leaders and everyday citizens are presently unable to petition for even the most basic change for fear of government retribution.

As recently as July 26, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved a resolution against holding the 2000 Olympics in China on human rights grounds alone. And the United States has consistently linked China's human rights practices to trade policy. Yet, some are perfectly willing to lend economic assistance to another country that makes a mockery of democracy and whose own economy and political system are controlled by a corrupt oligarchy.

We cannot submit to the hypocrisy of compromising our national integrity for a vague promise of jobs and dollars. If we are to avoid prostituting ourselves before the world, we must do better than giving only lip service to democracy and taking measures to uphold it only when it is convenient for us.

Patrick Sharbaugh is a regular contributor to Crossfire.

LETTERS

Financial aid secures students' futures

To the editor:

This is in response to your comments of Sept. 24 pertaining to the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships. As a USC graduate student and financial aid recipient, I concur with your assessment of the Financial Aid Office as "one of the most important entities of the USC community." The aspirations and dreams of many students would go unrealized if they were unable to secure financial assistance.

Since the summer of this year, I have been employed as a graduate assistant in the Office of Financial Aid. Let me share with your readers some facts that might help them understand more clearly the volume and complexity of work performed by our staff.

- As of Sept. 12, 1993, the Financial Aid Office had received and processed 20,102 applications for financial aid for the 93-94 academic year. Each application must be individually reviewed as it represents the unique needs of the student.

- 13,072 financial aid checks totaling \$75 million were made available for students at fall registration.

- Between July 3 and July 30 of this year, the Financial Aid Office received 12,893 phone calls. From July 31 through Aug. 27, the office received 15,883 calls. It would have been impossible to handle this volume of calls without the assistance of the voice response system.

This system is a cost-effective alternative to the hiring of additional permanent staff. Student assistants provide a number of critical services for the Financial Aid Office. Most are upper-level undergraduates or graduate students representing a wide array of academic programs. Student employees receive extensive and ongoing training in their areas of assignment.

All offices must continually assess their effectiveness in the areas of efficiency and student orientation. Your article contained some valid concerns which

should be addressed.

There are some things students can do to make the financial aid process less cumbersome. They should apply by deadlines indicated on application forms (April 15 for priority consideration), fill out all forms accurately and completely and respond to requests for additional information promptly.

Robin R. Brock
Education graduate

Accused students deserve due process

To the editor:

Gordon Mantler raised some very important issues in his Sept. 29 column. First, rape is a horrible offense and should be abhorred and prosecuted fully. Second, taking comprehensive measures to guarantee that a person's rights aren't violated does not necessitate depriving the rights of other people.

Mantler voiced a justifiable objection to the Antioch College policy of barring students from campus who have been accused of

rape but have not yet been found guilty by a court of law or other judicial body. However, it is interesting to note that this is what happened last year when two USC students were accused of rape. Although the state attorneys office dropped the case against these students, USC officials barred them from the use of any USC facilities.

Without being proven guilty of any offense, these students were prohibited from participating in intramurals, eating on campus, etc. and were instructed that they were allowed on campus solely to attend classes. This constitutes a flagrant violation of these students' right to due process.

The point of this letter is in no way to state that rape allegations should not be fully prosecuted and that the strongest measures shouldn't be taken when this crime occurs. However, even students are innocent until proven guilty, and by depriving these students due process, USC committed a violation of their rights.

Blake Mason
MIBS graduate



Letters Policy

The Gamecock will try to print all letters received. Letters should be 200-250 words and must include full name, professional title or year and major if a student. Letters must be personally delivered by author to The Gamecock newsroom in Russell House room 321. The Gamecock reserves the right to edit all letters for style, possible libel or space limitations. Names will not be withheld under any circumstances.