



'More RAs are needed because one RA is not sufficient for the amount of residents per hall.'

Tiran Thomas, Douglas RA

The Gamecock

Serving the Carolina Community since 1908

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Lawsuit against The State nearly comedic

Consider this scenario: The advertising department and the online staff of *The State* want to make more money from online casino ads. So they conspire with the editorial board to rally against video poker in the hope that when video poker is criminalized, more gamblers will turn to the online sites that advertise with *The State*.

Of course, nothing like this ever took place. This story was invented by Collins Entertainment for a lawsuit accusing *The State* of unfair trade practices.

We've got to hand it to Collins on one count: This has to be one of the most creative lawsuits ever filed. But our amusement is this lawsuit's only merit. The suit is simply an attempt to deflect criticism of video poker and get positive press by portraying the industry as a victim. This is especially obvious from the fact that other media outlets were told about the lawsuit before *The State* was.

We're confident that something this silly won't be taken seriously. There's a near-sacred separation of the advertising and editorial sections of a newspaper, and there's no evidence that *The State* has violated that. The paper had been writing against video poker for a long time before the ads appeared on its Web site. In fact, *The State* didn't even choose the ads. They were included in a set from the paper's parent company, Knight Ridder, which was unaware of the ads' true content. The ads have since been removed.

Furthermore, *The State* received only a nominal amount of money for these ads. What newspaper would compromise its integrity for a couple thousand dollars? Let's not give Collins Entertainment the satisfaction of being taken seriously. Instead, let's sit back and watch as the comedy unfolds.

Safe Ride questions still need answers

USC's Student Government is once again promising that the university-wide Safe Ride program, designed to provide students with sober transportation from Five Points during the weekends, is near fruition. But some of the same obstacles that hampered earlier efforts to secure the sober ride service must still be overcome, and the student senate doesn't seem to be any closer to answering any practical questions about the program. For example, Student Government might be committed to maintaining the service, but how will it fund Safe Ride? Will it be sponsored by Columbia businesses? Will the university help subsidize it? Will the money come from a portion of the student activity fee each student pays with tuition? If so, will this significantly increase tuition? Student Services co-chairwoman Melissa Fletcher's answer? "I'm not exactly sure where the money is coming from."

Also, Fletcher said she hasn't even met with USC Vehicle Management and Parking Director Derrick Huggins. All we know is that, according to Fletcher, Huggins "sounded like he wanted to cooperate for us." That's typical bureaucrat-ese for "We don't know how he will respond." The Safe Ride program is a worthwhile service and SG should be commended for its efforts, but unless senators can start getting answers to the program's fundamental funding questions, they're not going to get any closer to making Safe Ride a reality for USC.

COLLEGE PRESS EXCHANGE

NEW STUDY: ALCOHOL IS GOOD FOR HEART



STATE ISSUES

Education priority over poker

South Carolina has a huge problem. If I spelled education "ejukeyshion," would ya'll know what I be talkin' about? I thought so.

Mario Ona is a public relations senior and writes a column every other Friday. He can be reached via *The Gamecock* at gckviews@sc.edu

With our state having one of the worst educational systems in the United States, it is mind-boggling why our representatives insist on giving so much attention to some hate-pride symbolic cloth thing or some Nintendo card-game machines.

I don't get it. Maybe these representatives are victims of the same educational system and somewhere along the way, they weren't taught the meaning of "prioritize." Well, gentlemen, it's time to break the vicious circle and time to get these kids some real education. I'm certain the flag and video poker machine issues concern many and deserve our representatives' attention. But are these issues enough to justify procrastination on the education issue for as many years as I can remember?

I don't think so. "Prioritize" is the magical word.

We have seen some short-term initiatives to address the situation. But somehow, the issue dies down, and it's back to flags and Nintendo.

It seems that most of these representatives want to resolve the education problem within their term. So, rather than initiating a long-term plan, which seems like a necessity, they try fast and easy, yet ineffective measures that keep the problem stagnant, governor after governor after governor.

I recently read a great example that il-

lustrates this point. Sen. Darrel Jackson, D-Richland, proposed dropping the SAT requirement (currently 1200) of the \$5,000 Palmetto Fellows scholarship for minority high school graduates. This was in response to the low percentage of minorities that earn the scholarship every year. These students only earned 21 out of 704 total scholarships awarded in 1999.

My first reaction was: "Does Jackson have any interest in finding out WHY minority students are not earning more scholarships?"

My first question, after knowing of the low percentage, would have been: Why aren't minority students earning more scholarships?

While many people argue that the SAT is a poor way of measuring high school students' potential, it is beside the point in this case. It is the intent of trying to resolve a problem quickly and conveniently that makes my skin crawl.

If I were Jackson, I would have conducted some research to back a probable hypothesis: Minority students are not receiving the same preparation as their white middle-class counterparts.

With an educational system as bad as South Carolina's, it should come as no surprise that the scarce good schools of the state are located in white middle- to high-class neighborhoods.

Upon determination that minority students are not receiving an equal opportunity to be as prepared as their majority counterparts, then, and only then, can a course of action be taken. But even then, doing away with the standards is absurd.

There is no way to compensate for poor education. The minority students need to be prepared and given the instruments necessary to be able to compete with the majority.

For this reason, I think Jackson's pro-

posal is an abomination. You don't help someone climb a wall by getting a tractor and bulldozing the wall down. You lock your hands and give them a boost. If you bulldoze the wall, where is the sense of accomplishment for that person (especially when the person realizes everyone else had to climb the wall)?

By removing the SAT requirement as a means to "help" minority students earn the scholarship, Jackson would be rearing substandard citizens who are not capable of reaching the same standards as their majority counterparts.

Jackson's initiative might have some immediate results and put more minority kids in college, but does he realize the long-term consequences? Does he realize how hard college is without the proper tools?

What happens when inadequate preparation begins to show up in college and the percentage of minority student dropouts begins to increase? Will Jackson then propose doing away with finals for minority students or, better yet, do away with GPA requirements?

Why doesn't he just hand minority students college diplomas! This is a classic example of fast and easy, yet ineffective, initiative. While the problem is temporarily resolved, the negative consequences linger.

And the result is stagnation. So please, senators, representatives, political heads alike, put your heads together. Put the flags and video games away for now and at least take a first step toward better education for the future leaders of South Carolina.

If you don't, we are going to continue producing students who don't understand the word "priority."

And, Mr. Jackson, how about teaching kids how to fish instead of just giving them a fish? That way, they can eat for life.

LETTERS

Evolution not accepted as proven, scientific fact

To the Editor:
I am writing in response to the political cartoon you ran last week concerning evolution. In it, the Kansas school board is depicted saying, "We're not banning evolution... we're just eliminating... any mention of it... and pretending... it doesn't exist!" while going from a human to a micro-organism.

For one, the Kansas school board is not getting rid of evolution but instead treating evolution as only a theory. A theory is a plausible or scientifically acceptable general principle to explain phenomena, or an unproved assumption; conjecture. The school board is not teaching evolution as fact and is showing the flaws and inconsistencies that persist in evolution. The theory of evolution has NOT been proven to be true. The theory of evolution is so plagued with assumptions that if just one is wrong the whole theory is shot.

For example, there is a rock formation that one could take an evolutionist to and ask him/her how old it is. Now using their uniformitarian doctrine that states that existing processes acting in the same manner as at present are sufficient to account for all geological changes, they would look at the vast numbers of layers, some even

paperclip-thin, and state that the formation must be hundreds of thousands of years old, at least. They assume that a layer forms each year, because that is what we observe at the present, therefore many hundreds of thousands of years are needed to create the many layers they see. They would be dead wrong though, because this formation is at Mt. Saint Helens and was created in several days, NOT thousands of years. And if evolutionists can be wrong on this, what else can they be wrong about?

Or am I incorrect to say science could ever be wrong? Science KNEW 1500 years ago that the earth was the center of the universe. Science just KNEW 500 years ago that the earth was flat. And science KNOWS now that we evolved from single-celled organisms that just somehow appeared billions of years ago. What will we know tomorrow?

Donnie Pritchett
Pre-pharmacy junior

Religion columns found tasteless, opinionated

To the Editor:
I am a student here at the University of South Carolina and find your religious articles tasteless. I am probably not the first

person who has noticed your apparent lack of taste. Today's issue of *The Gamecock* has been the second issue with a less than appropriate religious story ["Heaven: not what it seems," Sept. 8; "Whole god not for everyone," Sept. 20]. I am quite aware that this is a secular university, but your humor is not appreciated. A wide variety of people come to this establishment for an education. Beyond popular belief, not everyone likes to guzzle beer and have sex. Some people here come from very religious families. On behalf of these people, I would appreciate it if you toned down your tasteless, humorless, opinionated and quite disrespectful articles. Thank you.

Clint Blunt
Pharmacy freshman

Editor's Note: The pieces appearing on the Viewpoints page opposite the editorials are columns, not factual articles, and reflect the opinion of the columnist only, not *The Gamecock*.

CAMPUS ISSUES

Students have to speak up

Sometimes, I think it's a good idea to discuss campus problems, to point them out so that concerns can be shared and to suggest possible solutions. So here we go, in no particular order:



Kiki McCormick writes a column every Friday. Her e-mail is kawarth@sc.edu

• Have you ever needed to schedule a certain class in a certain semester and been foiled because all sections of that class were in the same inconvenient time slot? Sometimes, sections are held at the same time because they are large lectures with smaller group meetings at other times. But often, sections are scheduled in the same slot for no discernible reason. It is, of course, a difficult job to coordinate the university's class schedules. But it would be helpful to students if the university could make an effort to offer classes at different times; this particularly applies to classes that are required for students in certain majors or schools.

• My God, the heat. My God, the cold. Have you ever tried to use the Thomas Cooper Library computer lab in winter? If so, you probably felt the need to wear a bathing suit and hydrate often. And what about sitting through class in Gambrell in August? Did you have to break out your woolen sweaters? Me, too.

Fortunately, this campus problem is in the process of being dealt with right now, according to Charles Stevenson of Energy Services in the Facilities Management Center. The problem with some buildings, Stevenson said, is that the manual thermostat controls in some buildings are difficult to adjust. The library controls, in particular, are difficult. This dilemma results in buildings that are overheated or over-cooled, resulting in discomfort and wasted energy and money. But relief is in sight.

Stevenson and his department want an energy master plan that includes digital thermostat controls for all buildings on campus. These controls would make it easier for his department to adjust temperatures to a comfortable level. Recently, \$600,000 was allotted for a first year of upgrades. Stevenson hopes to have that money spent by June. And — great news — he says the library is a priority.

• This is actually the problem of Marriott (or whomever is in charge of food services). "Rush hour" for food stations are, of course, those 15-minute breaks between classes, when we're in a big hurry to scarf something on our way across campus. It would seem that the staff would adjust to serve our needs, but that doesn't seem to be happening in some places, particularly in the Sidewalk Cafe in the humanities quad. I recently stood there in a long line to one register while four employees worked in the back. Why can't people work the registers for 15 minutes, helping us get to class on time, and then go back to their other duties?

• When you take a tennis class, don't you expect to be graded on, say, the development of your ability to play tennis? That logic escapes the Physical Education Department at USC. I admit this is a personal pet peeve of mine, as I got a B+ in tennis because, though I gained skills, I did poorly on the test that partly consisted of TENNIS HISTORY. It's asinine, I know, but it happened. I don't blame the coach, though. The P.E. Department requires a large part — in my experience, about a third — of the grade in a P.E. class to be "cognitive" in nature, which usually means a written exam. No matter how well a student learns to dance, or kayak, or play a sport, she could fail the class because of a possibly irrelevant, but required, written test.

Many students take P.E. classes to get some exercise with the discipline enforced by a grade to make themselves go to the gym. Others are in it for recreation, to relieve the stress of school. It doesn't help much when you know you can be given a poor grade, despite good effort, because of some test. I wish the P.E. Department would offer classes to serve these needs, or at least significantly reduce the grade percentage for written work.

So these are my thoughts. If you have any that I left out, that's what letters to the editor are for. We may as well express what we need and want out of this university — we're paying for it.

ABOUT US

The Gamecock is the student newspaper of The University of South Carolina and is published Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the fall and spring semesters and nine times during the summer with the exception of university holidays and exam periods.

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