



'For now I no longer stand as Jotaka Eaddy, but I stand as a representative of 26,000 students.'

Jotaka Eaddy, SG president

The Gamecock

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Enrollment decline needs more attention

USC's graduate school enrollment dropped almost 18 percent from last year, continuing a five-year trend that doesn't seem to be turning as many heads in the graduate school as it should be.

In fact, graduate school directors from different academic units on campus have attributed the floundering graduate school admissions to a robust economy in which undergraduates want to go straight to the work force upon graduation. However, USC is the only large university in the Carolinas whose graduate enrollment saw such a pronounced decrease: from 8,111 students in 1998 to 6,670 in 1999.

Eighteen percent. Think about that. If USC lost 18 percent of its undergraduate enrollment, our total student body population would be down to about 21,000, which would be the lowest enrollment we've seen in decades. That's not something to be only passively concerned about.

If 18 percent isn't a high enough number to be concerned, consider this: The College of Education lost more than half its graduate enrollment between 1998 and 1999.

Part of the problem, although certainly not the whole problem, seems to be the graduate school's movement toward online applications. Director of Graduate Admissions Dale Moore said the Web-based application system should be fully operational next month.

We can only hope administrators in charge of keeping graduate enrollment at a healthy level are more concerned about this problem than they actually seem to be, and that they're taking active steps to correct it. If the fully operational status of our Web-based admissions process doesn't turn things around for next year, it's time for all of us — administrators and students alike — to be concerned.

Statement by Penn State baseball team a weak one

Pennsylvania State University's baseball team has announced that it won't play any more games in the state of South Carolina until the Confederate flag is removed from the top of the Statehouse.

The Nittany Lions played two games while wearing red arm bands at Winthrop University last weekend. One African-American Penn State outfielder claimed the statement was one "against racism." This might seem admirable, but in reality, the team isn't making any sacrifices.

Penn State does not routinely play games in South Carolina. In fact, their two games in Winthrop were the only two games they will be playing in South Carolina this season.

If the players wanted to make a real statement, they should have boycotted the games before they were played, thus forfeiting the games and conceding two losses.

You might as well not even bother making a statement if you don't stand to lose anything by making it.

ABOUT US

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Letters to the editor or guest columns are welcome from all members of the Carolina community. Letters should be 250-300 words. Guest columns should be an opinion piece of about 600-700 words.

Letters must include name, phone number, professional e-mail address, or year and major, if a student. Handwritten submissions must be personally delivered to Russell House room 333. E-mail submissions must include telephone number for confirmation.

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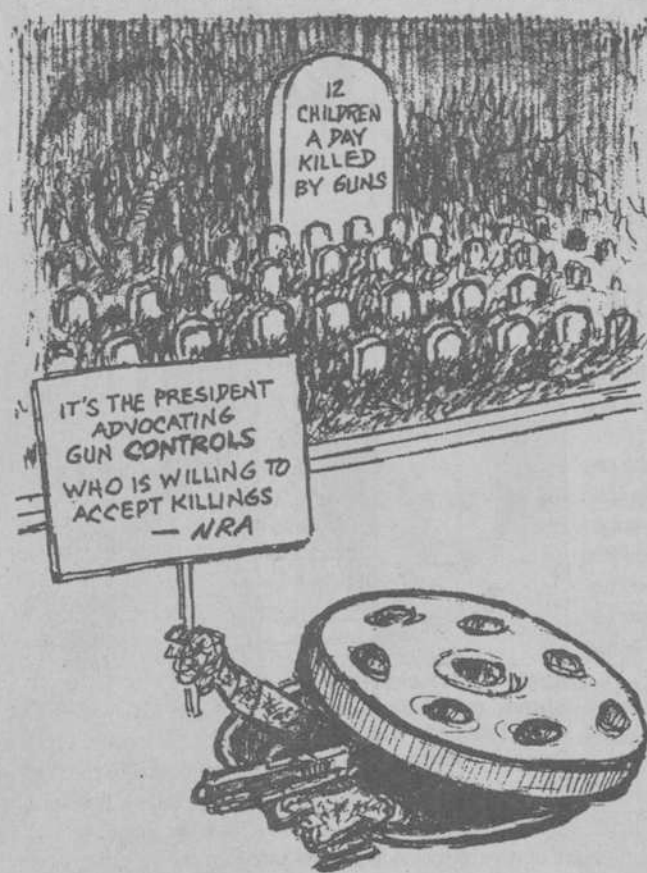
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THE WASHINGTON POST THE GUN-PUSHERS LOBBY COMES UP WITH A NEW ONE



"LOOKING AT GAS PRICES, YOU WONDER IF THOSE PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON DO ANY THINKING AT ALL"



POINT/COUNTERPOINT Meal Plan vs. No Meal Plan

Problem more with 'service' than 'dining'

For all of you who read my Feb. 23 column, I'm sure that you've been chomping at the bit waiting for my next column on how we can empower ourselves to a better way of life. This column will be about "the dining question."

First, some food for thought. A friend of mine whose sister attends Indiana University showed me IU's Fall 1999 Parent's Newsletter, which had the results of a recent survey of on-campus dining services at U.S. colleges. He showed me the newsletter because in the bottom six was Carolina.

This confirmed what I had been thinking all along: Our dining services are bad. But what are we hapless college students to do?

Demand better. Empower yourselves. Imagine eating non-reconstituted food and hydrated water.

At the core of USC's dining problem is Marriott Dining Services.

This evil empire dominates the food industry on campus and squelches any challenge to its power. (Used your meal plan at Smoothie King in the Blatt P.E. Center? I didn't think so.)

USC needs to start looking for an alternative to Marriott. Here's why. First of all, the problem is not so much the "dining" as it is the "service."

The people of the Grand Market Place, Taco Bell, etc., are apathetic, rude and incompetent. Just for the sake of controversy, I'd like to share this story with you. Last year, I was in the GMP and I asked the lady for some fried chicken. She was quite generous, and as she was handing me

the plate, the other lady said (as if I were deaf),

"Why you give him that much? He white." I managed to hide any emotion and pretended not to have heard it. (Hey, I had my fried chicken, right?)

That is what I think of Marriott Dining Services. I also think of the stupid "meal times" and the fact that you can only use one meal for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Inconvenient times, rude help, bad food and outrageous prices make on-campus dining worthless. All this outweighs the fact that all you need to get this is an easy-to-lose little card.

Of course, I don't see USC getting rid of Marriott anytime soon.

I am sure they are cashing in on the exploitation of USC students just as much as Marriott. So what you need to do is get rid of Marriott.

That's right. From here on, don't get a meal plan. I didn't this semester, and it is pure genius. What you need to do is get a cash card. Here's how it works.

If you get a cash card, it's basically a credit card for on campus. But unlike a meal plan, you can use it whenever you want and eat as much as you want. No more telling the cashier that your Sprite is water so that you don't go over your designated meal price because you ran out of bonus bucks last week. EVERY MEAL GOES OVER! AH! And here's the clincher. If you don't use your entire cash card at semester's end, your balance is refunded. Any missed meals aren't refunded when you have a meal plan.

I have a \$200 cash card. It's mainly for coffee in the morning and smoothies in the afternoon. I occasionally eat a meal or two, but I mainly subsist by doing my own cooking or eating out. In the long run, it's cheaper than a meal plan and the food is a helluva lot better.

So that's it. Get a cash card and tell Marriott to turn its meal plans sideways and stick them, well, you know where.

It's 8:45 a.m. You just woke up and you have class in less than 20 minutes. You scramble out of bed looking for a pair of jeans and a t-shirt.

You grab your books and head out of your residence hall.

As you approach Gambrell, you realize that you're starving. You dodge into the Side-walk Café and hope that they have your favorite chocolate-covered doughnut. As you approach the register, you suddenly realize you didn't bring any money with you. The clerk gives you a blank stare as she takes your card. "Meal," you say, remembering your faithful meal card. You take a bite out of that doughnut as you clumsily walk into your least favorite class, history. Oh well, you think to yourself, at least I have a meal plan.

The meal plans are here for one reason — convenience. If you have a car and spend only a few hours on campus per week, the meal plan isn't the right choice for you.

However, if you have 15 hours of classes and live in a dorm, the meal plan is the most logical way to eat. Having a meal plan guarantees that you will have between five and 21 hot meals per week, depending on which plan you get. It also promises that these meals will be satisfying. Marriott prides itself on service. If for any reason you are not satisfied, you can bring your food back and tell the manager. They will be more than happy to give you a refund or accommodate you accordingly.



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You can also join the food committee and discuss issues that concern you about Marriott Dining Services.

One great benefit of having a meal plan is Bonus Bucks. Sophomores have an extra \$100 at their disposal. You can use that money to get an extra snack or drink. Most of the meals are set up so you don't have to use your Bonus Bucks to contribute to your meal. (Unless you want two entrees and dessert every night of the week.)

Perhaps the best thing about having a meal plan at USC is having fast-food services right at our doorstep. True, other schools also have fast-food restaurants, but for example, at Clemson, students can't use their meal plan to pay for meals from Chick-Fil-A or similar venues.

Some students complain about not having enough choices, but we have a ton of places to eat on campus. We have five dining halls within residence halls, and the Grand Market Place has five lines. We have eight franchises/specialty restaurants. We also have three express cafes around campus. If students would take the time to visit these places, they could see we have a lot of places to eat on campus, all of which accept your meal plan.

Meal plans are by no means better than shopping for food and cooking in your dorm. Sure, you can go to Wal-Mart and buy two weeks of groceries for less than \$70. But, if you have a hectic schedule and tons of meetings and other activities, it may be hard to find time to clean up and cook meals during the week. When you break down the cost of the meal plan, the numbers are somewhat surprising. Students with 21 meals per semester are paying \$2.72 per meal.

Basically, meal plans are simple, convenient and economically sensible. We should support meal plans because the more students have them, the more Marriott will do to improve the program.

LETTERS

Cat catcher not racist

After reading *The Gamecock's* article "Black cat causes racial allegations" in the March 22 edition, I laughed hysterically. But then I became concerned.

According to the article, a student incorrectly believed that a cat was being harmed and wished to help it. This is understandable.

But the way the student confronted the problem reveals a major problem in today's society.

Though amusing, the student sincerely maintained that the cat was being trapped and confined on the basis of the cat's color and that the trapper, who uses his free time to help animals, was guilty of racism. This

exposes the fact that some members of society are conditioned to falsely cry out racism when dealing with a problem. They are conditioned to do this because it usually gets results.

I in no way condone racism (especially against cats) and I am aware that it exists in many parts of our lives.

However, to encourage racial harmony in our society, we need to make efforts to confront problems without using the "race card," especially when race has nothing to do with it.

Will Fogle
Finance and Economics Junior

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