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VIEWPOINTS

ONLINE POLL

Do you understand Value-Centered Management? www.dailygamecock.com. Results published on Fridays.

THE LEADER

USC's 'values'

Though the Strategic Directions and Initiatives report devotes a page and a half to the proposed "Value-Centered Management" system for USC, VCM would mean sweeping changes to the way USC divvies up money.

Blind leap of faith

USC's Student and Faculty senates have criticized VCM and questioned how the board plans to implement it. The board's answer is as disturbing as it is vague — essentially saying, "Trust us."

University administrators aren't even sure who would ultimately make the changes. It's possible that USC President John Palms could change the system on his way out the door.

It's hard to trust the board when we don't know whether trustees will have a vote.

Testing the system

The one encouraging aspect of the VCM plan is that USC would "test" it before

implementing it by paralleling it on paper for a year with our current management system. But that doesn't ensure the system will be fair.

In one scenario, money would be allocated based on the number of students in a college. In another, funds would be distributed based on the number of students enrolled in a certain college's classes.

Allocating the money based on credit hours would slant funding even more toward the "Cathedrals of Excellence" — Liberal Arts, Science and Math, Engineering and Business — where much of USC's wealth is already concentrated.

And it could lead to the proliferation of repetitive courses. The university could see colleges creating courses to pad their pockets, such as "Art History for Social Workers" or "English and Pharmacy."

VCM should be implemented carefully and after a great deal of thought. If done correctly, the system could lead to a stronger university, where colleges are rewarded for a job well done.

GAMECOCK CORRECTIONS

The day on the March 22 paper should have been Friday. The prizes for Carolina Productions' Oscar Party include a dinner for two at Dianne's on Devine.

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STAR TRIBUNE



CARTOON COURTESY OF KRT CAMPUS

When mediocrity is king



EDRIN WILLIAMS GAMECOCKVIEWPOINTS@HOTMAIL.COM

Mediocre black males have become the norm.

The jury has ended its deliberation and returned this verdict: The overwhelming majority of USC's black male population is guilty of blatant mediocrity.

Guys on this campus have too many systems in place to support the "strive-to-be-a-face-in-the-crowd" mentality. Everywhere we turn, we're being persuaded to do just enough to stay in school, and being the gullible souls that we seem to enjoy being.

And we treat mediocre men with too much regard. We allow them to call us their friends. We accept them into our

organizations. We even introduce them to our female acquaintances.

The mediocre black male has become the norm at this institution and is reaping the rewards. From the hundreds of Jay-Z and Mobb Deep lookalikes to the 112 wannabes, each has scheduled their classes around the Russell House lunch period.

Knowing this schedule, it angers me when I invite some of them to a meeting of the Brothers of Nubian Descent (BOND), and they give me a line about having to do this or that.

Another sector of the black male population needs to be addressed — members of the class of 1997 and before. They've been here long enough to know what goes on, yet I'm surprised that they don't do more mentoring to young, misguided men.

condone the practice. Instead of encouraging younger men to get involved with worthwhile organizations, they tell them to meet them at the gym where they show off their crossovers and class of '96 senior T-shirts.

I hope by now that all you mediocre black males are so mad that you go out of their way to prove me wrong. Get at least a 3.0 GPA this semester and show me how out of line I was.

Ladies, you have a responsibility, too. Stop settling for the guys who aren't about anything. You will know which guys are working toward goals.

Guys, I hope you realize what I'm trying to do here. I'm not trying to ridicule you for your complacency; I'm trying to let you see what society sees when they look at you.

Williams is a fourth-year African-American studies student.

IN YOUR OPINION

Don't take away students' rights

In regards to Ashley Lewis' March 20 letter, congratulations that you're in the Honors College. Here's your cookie.

She began by saying all of the perks that come with the Honors College have traditionally gone unchallenged by the student body. Realize that non-honors students have always thought it was unfair that the Honors College receives early registration.

Lewis compares honors students to athletes in that they rightfully deserve better housing. But athletes have talents. Honors students were born with the exceptional ability to take biased standardized tests well.

Try to ground yourself and realize you're not superior to anyone. I truly am sorry your friends got "verbally assaulted," but quit your bitching and leave upperclassmen with the rights they have become accustomed to.

MATT PENNINGTON THIRD-YEAR MARKETING STUDENT

Miani needs to be better informed

I just took a break from writing a paper for one of my "elitist" honors classes to read The Gamecock, and all I can say is, "What the hell?"

I'm one of the "prissy sophomores" who'll be stealing Horseshoe housing away from poor seniors next year, and I'm tired of hearing about it.

I'm sorry that Miani's teachers don't cut her any slack, but ours don't either when we have four tests, three papers, two labs and an Honors dinner with the university president in one week.

Remember this when you're 35 years old and not suffering from lung cancer because Capstone was renovated the summer before your senior year.

TRACY FORD FIRST-YEAR POLITICAL SCIENCE AND FRENCH STUDENT

Talented students deserve rewards

This "newspaper" has become a bastion of anti-intellectual sentiment.

Anyone who read Ann Marie Miani's column on Friday would certainly agree. She complains that honors students get privileges in almost every aspect of life at USC.

But USC rewards student-athletes in the same way. The lesson is that talent will bring rewards.

Miani continues, "Let's teach them early on that if they want something, they can get it because they're 'elite.'" Now she's making sense.

Though her final sentence was meant to be sarcastic, it's also truthful: "You can lament the fact that, if you had gotten a 1300 on your SATs, life at USC might have been better."

RYAN MORTON FOURTH-YEAR ANTHROPOLOGY STUDENT

Submission Policy

Letters to the editor should be less than 300 words and include name, phone number, professional title or year and major, if a student. Bring letters to Russell House 333 or e-mail gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com.

Having a senior moment



MARTHA WRIGHT GAMECOCKVIEWPOINTS@HOTMAIL.COM

We May 2002 graduates will be leaving prepared.

Here's a deal: These days, moments of reckoning cost \$38.81.

That's the going rate — sales tax included — for a cap, gown, tassel and honor cord at the Russell House Bookstore.

As "sayonara" symbols go, the purchase of graduation garb is hard to top. We can't predict the future, but we know what we'll be wearing to greet it.

Still, most graduating seniors are ready for that world. There are a lot of us chomping at the bit. This past fall, 4,275 people were classified as seniors at USC-Columbia, and 334 were, like me, enrolled in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications.

My brain is packed with thoughts about starting life after school. Superstitiously, I feel that completing graduation-related errands hastens its arrival.

I didn't try on the outfit in the bookstore, except the hat (it had to be screened for willingness to accommodate fluffedy Southern hair).

But when I brought my graduation gear back to my dorm, I decided to try it on. I unpacked and put on the billowy, black gown, knowing I'd never be able to redo the incomprehensible origami that made it fit in its crinkly plastic cube.

Next was the mortarboard, another variation on medieval dress. The black cloth didn't quite fit the broad, flat top. At first, I mistakenly put it on backward, the Eddie Munster widow's peak sitting squarely between my eyebrows.

Looking in the mirror, I could imagine myself in the parade of graduates on May 10, all of us in baggy black robes and flat hats, looking like frumpy and somber coasters.

In my room, not a graduate but dressed the part, I thought about my haste to leave this academic world for the world of work. By now, I'm sure a lot of us have come down with senioritis as we tally our credits and earn the GPA we need to graduate.

Instead, I think this eagerness to go is a sign we've been well educated. All that we've learned from professors and mentors and advisers and friends is ready to be tested in the real world, where class rank and GPA and honors are wholly irrelevant.

On the day that marks that transition, we'll wear our tilted caps, shapeless gowns, tangled tassels and confused cords.

Wright is a fourth-year print journalism student.