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Arts & Entertainment

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
LUC represents students well

Having supported the smoking legislation with my voice and vote, I feel that last week's editorial [staff editorial "LUC fails to represent students"] about LUC failing to represent students was completely inappropriate.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
Yarnell off the mark in convo criticism

I would like to respond to Mr. Yarnell's remarks on the May 22nd convocation by William Julius Wilson.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
Intolerance of Prof. causes problems for students

A few weeks ago, I withdrew from a class because I believed that the professor's lectures were very one-sided and that he/she attempted to stifle those students who contradicted him/her. I found this very disturbing, especially since the fear of receiving low grades made some students hesitant to speak in opposition to the professor....

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
LU Alum Defends Police

I have lived in the Valley for many years before returning to college at Lawrence as a "non-traditional" student, and am familiar with the area, including the City of Appleton and its history. As a 1999 grad, I am also familiar with the "hassles" of many of the students, and keep up with campus happenings through copies of The Lawrentian at Conkey's (although some copies there are older issues). I am responding to David Heyer's letter to the editor in the April 27th issue.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
Debate over convocation continues

Although Mr. Wilber's response to my editorial addressing the Wilson convocation had some important points, I believe he misinterpreted the intent with which it was written.

The first point concerns the missing father figure of the single mother instanced by Wilson and myself....
Faculty salaries rank low compared with peer institutions

By Jeff Peyton

A Governance Committee report examining faculty compensation (salary + benefits) last year found that, when measured against a comparison group of approximately twenty colleges, Lawrence ranked in the bottom quartile.

The study showed that, though Lawrence wasn't strong in either category, it was relatively weaker in terms of benefits than of salary, especially in medical insurance. The study also demonstrated that the relative disadvantage applies to every level of professor—full, associate, and assistant. The study did not take cost of living expenses into account.

Then chair of the committee, Professor of Government Claudena Skran, explained that the comparison group was composed of colleges from all around the nation that Lawrence saw as its peer institutions, as well as schools that rank higher ('aspirational institutions') and lower than Lawrence. Because of the composition of the group, Skran had anticipated that Lawrence would rank somewhere in the middle.

Dean of Faculty Brian Ronsenberg in an interview with The Lawrentian, said that he was not surprised by the outcome of the study. Rosenberg explained that, though not all, many of the schools in the comparison group had larger endowments than Lawrence. In the Midwest, for example, Carleton and Macalaster have endowments three times the size of Lawrence's (approximately 200 million), while Grinnells' is five times larger. Also, explained Rosenberg, some schools give out less financial aid than Lawrence.

In light of the report, the Board of Trustees took steps to alleviate the disparity in relative compensation. In addition to paying a greater portion of faculty health insurance costs, salaries were increased a greater percentage in the 2000-2001 academic year than in past years.

Despite these increases, Rosenberg said that the issue of faculty compensation was not an easy one to solve. Lawrence, he pointed out, is not a profit-making institution, and the money that is not spent on faculty salaries is spent on other things, including financial aid, student programs, the library, and computers. Consequently, the school, in order to increase faculty compensation, would need to either make cuts elsewhere or raise more money, perhaps by increasing tuition. Raising tuition too quickly, however, has negative implications as well, as it threatens to deter students from attending Lawrence, or could even encourage student attrition.

The bottom line, however, is also clear. "If we expect to recruit and retain the best faculty it is important to compensate them at a commensurate level," said Skran. Rosenberg echoed Skran's sentiment, "if salaries become un-competitive, then [the school] can't hire the kind of faculty [it] wants to hire or keep the kind of faculty [it] wants to keep."

This is an especially valid concern in light of the increasing disparity shown in faculty salaries among the Associated Colleges of the Midwest. According to statistics printed annually by The Chronicle of Higher Education, as of 1991, Lawrence ranked sixth out of 13 schools in terms of average salary for an associated professor, which remains Lawrence's rank in 2001. However, in that time, the gap between Lawrence and the top school has grown wider—in 1991, Lawrence associate professors averaged $4,300 less per year than the top paying ACM school, whereas in 2001, the difference is $9,000 per year.

Rosenberg explained that the increased spread was "no mystery" as the top paying schools in the ACM—Grinnell, Carlton, and Macalester—have significantly larger endowments than Lawrence. Because those schools have larger endowments, their endowments will grow at a faster pace than Lawrence's. "Resource differences tend to get wider rather than smaller," said Rosenberg. The gap in salaries between heavily endowed schools and less endowed schools is, therefore, one that is not likely to close.

Professor of government Minoo Adenwalla noted that he could understand Lawrence not being able to keep up with schools with larger endowments, but said, "If the university can raise these large sums of money for buildings, surely they can raise money to try to bring Lawrence faculty salaries up to a higher level...we're very rich in bricks in mortar, but maybe not in terms of flesh and blood."

Rosenberg responded that, though the point was well taken, the funding for buildings and for salaries comes from different sources. Buildings, which the university considers capital expenses, are paid for through fundraising and loan taking, whereas faculty salaries, which the university considers operational expenses, must come from tuition and interest earned on the endowment.

Rosenberg concluded his remarks noting the complexity of the problem and the university's awareness of it. "During the last couple years [the administration] has
indicated to trustees that salaries are a high priority and that we ran a risk if we didn't address salaries as not being competitive," said Rosenberg, "and I think they've been responsive to that." Though it may be impossible to catch up with wealthier schools, the goal, said Rosenberg, "should be to try to do better with salaries."

Information taken from The Chronicle of Higher Education:

Median Salary of an Associate Professor among ACM colleges: 1991 and 2001

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<th>College</th>
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Coffeehouse Committee receives $7,516 for next year
By Helen Exner

LUCC approved next year's budget on Thursday, but not before hearing arguments from representatives of the Coffeehouse Committee who felt they should have received funding. The council passed an amended budget granting $7,516 to the Coffeehouse Committee, which the Finance Committee had originally recommended receive $0.

Juniors Matt Kretzmann and Heather Edmunds spoke for the original recommendation. Edmunds said she wanted to "dispel the rumor that the Coffeehouse Committee is part of SOUP." Formed last year, SOUP is an umbrella organization for on-campus programming groups. Paul Shrode said the group's founding goal was to centralize existing committees and provide coordination for campus programming.

According to several council members, when SOUP's $31,000 programming budget was approved last term, LUCC members believed that the Coffeehouse Committee was part of SOUP. LUCC faculty representative Randall McNeill stated that when LUCC approved SOUP as a new organization, he understood that it was "truly an umbrella group ... [The] implication [was] that the Coffeehouse was part of that." According to Vice President Adam Locke, LUCC believed at that time that the Coffeehouse Committee had been absorbed into SOUP.

During their budgetary process last term, SOUP's representatives told the Finance Committee that the Coffeehouse Committee had been absorbed by SOUP, though Kretzmann and Edmunds deny the merger.

Although Representative Pete Stevens noted that the Coffeehouse Committee did not have the necessary five members present at that meeting, Locke said their funding was denied for other reasons. Locke also said that when the Finance Committee learned that the Coffeehouse Committee was an independent organization, they received "a guarantee from Paul Shrode" that the Coffeehouse Committee would receive funds from Shrode's departmental budget next year. Given that guarantee, the Finance Committee saw no reason to give additional funds to the Coffeehouse Committee. Shrode acknowledged that the two groups currently face "a fuzzy transition," noting that film committees have also "backed away from SOUP." He said that Kretzmann requested $12,000 from LUCC for the Coffeehouse Committee. Kretzmann, when referred to SOUP by the Finance Committee, learned that SOUP was far from able to provide this level of funding. Shrode said he told Kretzmann that the department budget for student programming would fund the Coffeehouse Committee, although, according to Shrode, they did not "discuss dollar totals."

Edmunds expressed concern over the umbrella-like nature of SOUP's authority, asking the council whether they felt "comfortable giving a monopoly [on campus programming] to SOUP." She went on to say that the Coffeehouse Committee's entertainment acts "promote diversity" and are popular among students.

Several council members supported the Coffeehouse Committee, arguing that denying funds would punish the group for LUCC's mistake. According to Stevens, "It was not in our best interest to approve SOUP's budget the way we did." Representative Lisa Redpath added, "Personally I would like to see SOUP's budget cut in half." McNeill said, "If it is anybody's fault, I guess it was the fault of SOUP."

Locke objected several times that the council should "hold off on changes pending approval of the newspaper program," the Gannett-sponsored readership program currently being tested at Lawrence. After discussing concerns as to whether the council could afford the newspaper program along with a major allocation to the Coffeehouse Committee, LUCC passed the amended budget granting $7,516 to the Coffeehouse Committee. Shrode said these funds will come directly from LUCC, not from SOUP or
Shrode's departmental budget.

After the meeting Shrode said, "I'm not sure all the information came out here. It’s unfortunate that SOUP was not able to participate in the discussion. ... But I think it was good that the Coffeehouse got some additional funding. ... I also think that we're going through some growing pains with SOUP."

Kretzmann said, "Obviously, we are very pleased with the decision today. We're glad that we were able to straighten miscommunications that have taken place over the past months. ... I think this is a sign that the programming organizations on campus need to communicate better in the future and hopefully begin coordinating and planning in a more efficient manner."

Some members from various campus clubs and organizations protested after the meeting that LUCC did not tell them to attend the budget proceedings. Rachel Zuckerman, a member of the YUAI Community, said that she only heard about the meeting "from a posting on a bathroom stall." The YUAI's requested $8,023.75 and received $295. Zuckerman, who did not attend the LUCC meeting because she did not know about it, said the council promised to sponsor Skappleton next year, a punk and ska festival that it sponsored this year. She said that event would be impossible to sponsor with $295.

In other actions, LUCC turned down an appeal from LUSH, the Lawrence University Society of Horns, to pay for a conference in Michigan. The council recognized PALS (Pioneers and Lawrentians) as a new organization, and tabled motions of the Climbing Club and Chameleon, an a cappella vocal group, which requested recognition. They also tabled a reallocation request from the Black Organization of Students. Also, a proposed amendment to LUCC bylaws which would lengthen cabinet terms of office was voted down.
The woman in Hitler's bathtub, and other stories

By Helen Exner

In her 1999 book *The Women Who Wrote the War*, author Nancy Caldwell Sorel tells the stories of a dozen women reporters who dodged bullets and defied orders to scoop their competitors during World War II. With an attentive eye to historical detail, Sorel skilfully weaves multiple narratives of women based in the European and Pacific theaters to reveal a new perspective of the "good war."

Nearly all of the women in the book reported as officers of the U.S. army, but not all were Americans. Several entered journalism at small-town newspapers, moving on to Columbia Journalism School or larger publications like the New York Herald Tribune or Life magazine. A few women were born in Germany or Russia, and most found their way into the U.S. press corps by writing for bureaus in Berlin, Paris, or London.

All of them wanted a piece of the biggest story of the century, and those fortunate enough to obtain the necessary military papers became members of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC), becoming known as "Wacs." The correspondents held the rank of "captain" so that if they were captured by the enemy, they would not be viewed as spies. Sorel notes that the rank, while only symbolic, meant a lot to these women because it made them look and feel professional.

Several women had reported on the Spanish civil war in the 1930s, and a few had covered conflicts in previous decades. But by 1942, when the U.S. entered the war, woman correspondents faced resistance from military commanders forced to put up with them and male reporters who resented women invading their realm. Woman reporters were not welcome, as several executive orders from Generals Patton and MacArthur made clear. Once they arrived in Europe, and later the Pacific, these women had to maneuver through strict military regulations to get their stories.

All reporters had certain rules to follow, but woman reporters faced even more red tape in various forms. They were restricted from reporting near the front, while male reporters usually could slip through. Military commanders worried about the heat they'd have to take if a woman was killed in action.

Despite the risks to their careers, and often, to their lives, the most successful reporters got their stories by bending or breaking regulations. Women who were audacious enough to break the rules often paid the price by losing their official accreditation, thus barring them from reporting for weeks or months. It was these women who witnessed pivotal events of the war, often scooping the entire press corps, to the chagrin of many male reporters.

Margaret Bourke-White, the famous Life magazine photojournalist, was the only reporter present when the Nazis invaded the USSR on June 22, 1941. Lee Miller, single-handedly covered the battle for Saint-Malo, a French seaside town under siege in August 1944. Patton's troops had secured Brittany's entire northern coast except for this town; she later wrote gleefully, "I was the only photographer for miles around and I now owned a private war."

Like the GIs who featured so often in their stories, woman reporters carried their own weight, lugging heavy typewriters and writing supplies. They contradicted the conventional wisdom that women were too fragile for war. Bourke-White always carried five cameras and several cartons of film. Dickey Chapelle, an ambitious 25-year-old photographer from Milwaukee, managed to sneak into Iwo Jima's front via a transport ship only after spending several months photographing gory amputations and surgery.

Although woman reporters proved their courage and toughness many times, many of them still enjoyed the attention paid to them by exhausted, wounded soldiers overjoyed to see an American woman. They were serious professionals, but after long months spent eating...
K-rations, more than a few of the women grabbed the chance to dress up and eat in style. One woman managed to keep her brunette locks dyed blonde through the duration of the war. Not surprisingly, some male colleagues accused women of seducing their interview subjects with their feminine wiles. One man complained loudly during a makeshift Christmas dance, "Can I dance with a GI? Can you? Course not. But that's the way a dame gets stories."

This book's only failing is its attempt to tell so many stories, a problem that Sorel acknowledges in her preface. She wants readers to appreciate the range of her subjects’ talents and achievements, but even at 398 pages, the book cannot fully explore the lives of these intriguing women. At best, Sorel can only introduce us to them and to their writing, which she presents in lengthy excerpts, allowing the women to tell the story in their own words.

Still, their articles from various fronts—in Guam, the Philippines, Paris, Czechoslovakia, Berlin—more than compensate for the occasional disjointedness. The author pieces together the women's personal tales in lucid prose that doesn't glorify the women. She notes their personal failings and biases, yet still leaves the reader astonished at their tenacity and dedication to the task of reporting the war.

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Bridget Jones's Diary brings realistic characters to screen
By Ceilidh Mar

The first time I saw Bridget Jones's Diary was in a dark and remarkably sticky theater. I must admit the environment would have simply ruined almost any show. Any show, that is, but this one.

This horribly comic yet gently heartwarming script is based on the novel by Helen Fielding. Originally written as a newspaper serial, it runs through a year in the life of the single, thirty-two year old Bridget Jones. The original concept is loosely based on the popular Jane Austen novel Pride and Prejudice. A much updated and comically twisted version, it deals with the ordinary and extraordinary problems of single life.

The intro itself is enough to captivate you—a New Year’s declaration that hints at the huge number of neuroses that she suffers from. From weight problems to exorbitant smoking and drinking, from family problems to age issues, this girl has them all. Yet we follow her through a year of her progresses, constantly hoping that she will manage to get it together. Her largest problem focuses on the "emotional f*ckwittage" of the opposite sex. The reader gets a definite sense of frustration and an intense buildup to the end, which climaxes in several unexpected ways.

The movie, on the other hand, takes a more general and expected route. The film, while following the general line of the novel, takes a very different path towards an ending. One fan was quoted as saying "I’d consider this a very nice adaptation because it sticks to the spirit of the book. Some literary elements that would not translate as well to film are replaced by film elements that would not translate well to literature."

And it is true; the essential roots of the novel can clearly be made out in the film. Characters are very well represented and the very British sense of comedy, while not overwhelming the film, can gladly still be found. It fact, the characters seem to almost spring to life from the page. It helps that the character of Mark Darcy was written with Colin Firth in mind. Colin, who plays Mark Darcy on the big screen, also played a different Mr. Darcy in BBC’s and A&E’s 1995 collaborative production of Pride and Prejudice. While the two characters share some obvious differences, they both have the same aloof yet eventually charming features.

Also well acclaimed for the role is the leading character of Bridget. Renée Zellweger, lead actress, is hilariously funny. Her accessible and heartwarming portrayal of a held-back but unstoppable femme is a very plausible mirroring of the novel’s account of Bridget. Even more amazing is the actress’s willingness to adapt for the part. The character’s description required Renée Zellweger to gain more than twenty pounds, yet she donned the extra weight and daringly shows herself as a real human being and not, as Helen Fielding puts it, a "stick insect."

The film has done very well in theatres, grossing more than 4 million dollars this week alone and rating number six in the top ten highest grossing film of the week. Since its opening on April 15th Bridget Jones’s Diary has managed to stay within the top ten movies on the large screen charts. With its humorous scenes (and I just have to mention one of the funniest fight scenes I have ever seen) and solid character choices, this film echoes perfectly the best selling novel it was based on. This well written and obviously popular film is among one of my must-sees for the summer season.
Library acquisition system

By Helen Exner

New books and periodicals in the Seeley G. Mudd Library enter the system in several ways, as Corrine Wocelka, the library's director of technical services, and Susan Richards, director of the library, explained in a recent interview. The process starts with the budget allocated by the university, which is divided between the library and university departments. When a professor thinks the library is lacking important books, he or she sends a wish-list to Wocelka, who manages the budget. She usually orders books from vendors, like Bookhouse and Blackwells North America, since, she said, "we can get better deals" through vendors. If a professor needs a book immediately, Wocelka orders directly from the publisher, contacting companies like Amazon.com. Richards said that the library prefers going through vendors, even though an order can take up to eight weeks to arrive. The latter option forces them to "pay top dollar" in shipping costs.

Ordering periodicals is a more complicated process. Many science journals are very expensive, Richards said, costing between $5,000 and $8,000 a year. She continued, "A journal is a longtime investment," so department heads must approve the purchase of journals, which become more expensive every year. Students who use the interlibrary loan system also play a role in the acquisition process. The loan system allows students to borrow books and journals from university libraries throughout the Midwest. Students doing research on obscure topics rely on this system, which, Richards emphasized, "is not cheap." The expense comes from processing requests, photocopying articles, and shipping documents. Still, interlibrary loan is often a good resource for students unable to convince the library to buy a book they want.

Richards and Wocelka both stressed their commitment to helping professors and students locate the resources they need. They often hold new books for individuals, allowing them to do research more quickly. Richards said, "Anyway we can [help], we're willing to work on it."
Annual Senior Art Exhibit

By Rachal Hoerman

The annual senior art exhibit opens Friday, June 2 at the Wriston Art Center Galleries. Featured senior artists included in the exhibit are: Charlie Arnold, Sarah Bowen, Gianina Contin, Jacob Cox, Jessica Justice, Dana Kass, Marc Kele, Keith Lepinski, George Lundgren, Betsy Moyer, Jennifer Ray, Mollie Strom, and Kristina Sunde. The opening reception for the senior art show runs from 6-8:30 p.m., and the show will be displayed through August 12.

Forum:
No comments have been posted for this story.

Post a comment
Milwaukee club serves salsa, merengue
By Tom Kilian

Merengue and salsa are not just dances, they're addictions. But for those dance addicts around the state who wake up in a cold sweat, you may have trouble finding a hot Latin beat. Still it is possible to find a place, a place not too far from Appleton, to turn and twirl. This place is Milwaukee's El Babalu.

El Babalu Caribbean Club and Restaurant is not hard to find. In fact, you may just hear it before you see it. Follow the sound of salsa until you get right around the 600 block of W National Ave. You'll see a rundown bar called Felipe's Place. Don't go there. Instead, go across the street where you'll find a fairly large building, windowed in a manner that gives the lucky passerby a view of the dance floor. That's your place. On a Friday night, if there's a D.J., cover is $5.00. By all means pay it.

Once you're inside, you'll find that the property is well kept and attractive. The atmosphere is comfortable and friendly; something that can be attributed to the venue's staff and patrons. Most inside the club dress stylishly, but you can leave your suit and tie at home.

Among a largely Hispanic crowd, you'll find the non-Hispanic, the young, the old, those who are gifted dancers, and those who haven't a prayer. Overall, everyone is having a good time. There's no velvet rope and most of the razzle-dazzle comes from the moves on the dance floor.

The music, well, the music is buenísim. If the D.J. is spinning, expect sets of salsa and merengue to dominate, with a hint of other Caribbean beats, hip-hop, and techno. If not, prepare to swivel your hips to top merengue, salsa, and cumbia acts hailing from the states and abroad. And if you like to watch, then you've come to the right place. Even if you don't Latin dance, the view is more than entertaining. Word on the street is that dance professionals and instructors from around Milwaukee frequent El Babalu. The result: more uninhibited movement than NAFTA.

Those who are of the mindset that a few sips helps shake the hips, a beer or a mixed drink will set you back around $4.00. Or better yet, come during the day, Tuesday through Friday, to savor an array of reasonably priced Caribbean cuisine while you sip your Corona.

Given the attractive venue, the great music, and the friendly atmosphere, it is fair to say that El Babalu is probably the finest Latin club north of the border, the Illinois-Wisconsin border, that is.
LETTER TO THE EDITOR: LUCC represents students well

Having supported the smoking legislation with my voice and vote, I feel that last week’s editorial [staff editorial “LUCC fails to represent students”] about LUCC failing to represent students was completely inappropriate.

Although no rigorous survey has been conducted to determine the ratio of smokers to non-smokers, LUCC has every indication that the number of non-smokers vastly outnumbers the number of smokers. Increasingly many housing applications have requested smoke-free living space. Even the photo poll printed in the last issue showed that four out of six students were either apathetic or advocates of LUCC’s decision. No evidence exists to support the notion that the majority of students smoke, as claimed by the editorial. Some students want smoking in the union, others don’t. I feel that LUCC has done a good job representing both interests.

There is an undeniable feeling in many circles that the union is inaccessible to them because there is simply too much smoke there. A student union is a place for all students. When this fails to be the case, the whole idea of a student union is a joke.

While the editors of the Lawrentian would have us believe that Mr. Shrode had devious intentions when he reported to the council that upgrading the VR would cost $20,000, the argument misses the point. It makes no sense to make large capital investments in a building that will be replaced in several years. Such an investment would be a disastrous waste of funds.

The editorial claimed that students attending the meeting were not given an opportunity to speak. However, Mr. Worman specifically asked for input from the community. Ms. Brown was twice yielded the floor. Addressing the council is merely a matter of raising your hand. The individuals who later claimed not to be represented could have clearly seen how easy it is to be recognized by watching Ms. Brown. The Lawrentian itself admitted these facts on page five of the last issue.

—Nick Aschbrenner

The Lawrentian would like to note that it specifically stated that it did not wish to “say that Shrode has any inappropriate intentions” [“LUCC fails to represent students,” second to last paragraph], only that it is “not possible” to fill simultaneously the advisor’s roll and advocate legislation.

—Ed.
LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Delta Tau Delta article criticized

I am writing this letter rather reluctantly. I do not wish to begin an incendiary debate about Allison Augustyn’s platitudes (I refer to her May 25th article addressing certain issues with the Delta Tau Delta fraternity). However, Allison has made a few statements that I find disturbing to such a degree that I cannot remain silent. The first thing I want to bring up is that Allison’s latest manifesto is nothing more than a consummate anthology of disastrously bad writing teeming with misquotations and inaccuracies, an odyssey of anecdotes that are as relevant as discussing the Minnesota Viking quarterback’s accolades at a Packers game.

Let me start by pointing out that the accuracy of your journalism runs as deep as your bylines. I’m sure that the Delta chapter president Brion Winters will agree with me, you need more than a spell- and grammar-check to write newspaper articles. And who can forget the blaze of ’97 and its deep implications on today’s issues. It seems as if by some unseen stroke of mercy that “This time the Delts are allowed to reside in the house”. Pardon my sarcasm, but that’s a stupid thing to say. The relocation of Delta fraternity members had nothing to do with any disciplinary action; it was a matter of not having minimum safety standards as the result of an accident.

I’d also like to add a comment about the quality of your investigative reporting. Of the three members you quote (aside from the statement by Brion Winters): all three are freshmen, only two of which hold active membership in the fraternity, and none of whom had firsthand or authoritative knowledge of the situation. I would ask you to please consider your sources of information more carefully in the future.

The article attempts to report on disciplinary actions against Delta Tau Delta, accusations of unfair and biased treatment towards the fraternity, and even so much as equal housing opportunities. It fails on each account. I suggest that each be addressed separately if the Lawrentian wishes to do justice to all of them. To end on a more positive note: I have no sympathy for those who gain little more from Freshman Studies than the money for their textbooks and a t-shirt.

-Chris Phelps
LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Yarnell off the mark in convo criticism

I would like to respond to Mr. Yarnell’s remarks on the May 22nd convocation by William Julius Wilson.

First of all, Mr. Yarnell brings up the story of the woman on a $7 an hour salary, who could not afford health care for her children. He makes it clear that we should be wary of women who make the irresponsible decision to have children, of all things. It is silly to ask whether we should support this woman if she “decided to have four kids? Or six? Where do you draw the line between ‘victimized’ and ‘irresponsible’?”

The fact is that she had two kids, and let’s stick to that. Now, I understand, as a male, Mr. Yarnell’s oversight of the male role in this situation. However, the fact remains that this woman did not impregnate herself. There are many single mothers on welfare and very few single fathers; where is the father of these children? He is unlikely to be supporting these children, leaving him better able to support himself and stay off welfare. Is he a better citizen than the mother? The part of the story involving the fathers of children raised by single mothers is what is not being heard. Universal health care is an important goal, regardless of how many children anyone has.

Say there were legitimately born children to a conventionally married couple, making enough to support themselves and live comfortably. What happens when energy prices rise during an unusually cold winter; when at least one parent is laid off and out of work an extended period; or their rents go up due to gentrification? Are the parents irresponsible for not foreseeing a poor economy? What if the father dies, leaving the woman with several children and little income? The fact is, many factors cause poverty, most of them “legitimate” enough to satisfy Mr. Yarnell. It seems odd to classify people as being poor for the right reasons or not. I’m sure that none of them think there is a good reason. Are we to judge them, help some, and leave others to rot in poverty? As humans, our responsibility is to help them, we who do not have these worries.

As someone who has received state aid from the WIC program when my father was laid off and incapacitated with a back injury for several months, my view may be biased. But no more so than that of one who has never been in a similar situation—there are many at this school who could benefit by Mr. Wilson’s wake-up call. I am disappointed that Mr. Yarnell’s opinion reflects the trend noted by Mr. Wilson as an American phenomenon: welfare recipients are poor because they are individually flawed.

Lastly, I would like to point out that, while I support a variety of views on this campus, I think it is pointless to label this convocation “liberal”. As Mr. Wilson pointed out, there is a consensus among liberals and conservatives on the aforementioned view of welfare recipients, making not a political issue, but one of simple human decency which I would hate to see stamped out by political posturing and pointless debate.

-Doug Wilber

No comments have been posted for this story.

Post a comment
LETTER TO THE EDITOR: LU Alum Defends Police

To The Editor:

I have lived in the Valley for many years before returning to college at Lawrence as a "non-traditional" student, and am familiar with the area, including the City of Appleton and its history. As a 1999 grad, I am also familiar with the "hassles" of many of the students, and keep up with campus happenings through copies of The Lawrentian at Conkey's (although some copies there are older issues). I am responding to David Heyer's letter to the editor in the April 27th issue.

I can understand David's frustration with the Appleton police, however their activities are hardly "to harass and annoy." The history of "the Ave," as College Avenue has become known over the years, has made the "overabundance of police cars" quite necessary. Their presence has less to do with Lawrence students, and more to do with high-schoolers.

Up until roughly 12 (maybe 15) years ago, Oneida Street flowed straight through downtown Appleton, crossing College Avenue as all the other thoroughfares did. The Fox River Mall was fairly new, and its retail competition made downtown Appleton nearly a ghost town--retail traffic was nearly nonexistent. A group of investors pooled their money and constructed the Avenue Mall, intending to revitalize the downtown area and bring back retail shopping, particularly for the holidays.

Well, along with the new mall and rerouted traffic, there slowly appeared a new occupant to downtown--the "cruisers." They would bring their loud cars downtown and cruise "the Ave" all night long. Most of the cruisers were teenagers with nowhere else to go. Cars were often double parked and disrupted traffic. The cruisers brought with them the "hangers", the groups of kids on the street corners, eventually the hangers brought with them the "bangers" and the "wannabes", many of whom were not from Appleton at all, and with them came a petty drug trade and incidences of violence. Downtown businesses were vandalized, burglarized, and their businesses badly bruised by this downtown presence.

About seven years ago, the City of Appleton made a concerted effort to clean up the downtown and bring back the night life that had been chased away. This was a joint effort between Appleton youth groups, downtown businesses, churches, neighborhood watches, and yes, the police. A great deal of effort, time and money went into cleaning up the downtown (most of the money generated by - "sigh" - parking tickets). Without this cleanup effort and the procedures that currently exist, the downtown area would be a very unpleasant place to be, as it once was.

I understand David's anger and need to vent, however there is indeed a great deal of logic behind the downtown situation. He might have given that some thought and used just a little less sarcasm.

Yours Truly,

Leslie Marquardt Vidas
Lawrence Class of 1999
LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Intolerance of Prof. causes problems for students
By Molly S. Waggoner

A few weeks ago, I withdrew from a class because I believed that the professor’s lectures were very one-sided and that he/she attempted to stifle those students who contradicted him/her. I found this very disturbing, especially since the fear of receiving low grades made some students hesitant to speak in opposition to the professor. I personally felt like my comments were avoided or brushed off because I tended to disagree with the professor’s position. I wanted to determine if there were other people who had had the same experience, because if there were, I would know this was a serious problem meriting official action.

I used various methods to locate others who had similar feelings about this professor, including putting up posters. I left them anonymous since I did not want to make a public accusation before collecting more information, but I planned to reveal my identity and openly explain the situation later, through a letter to the Lawrentian. However, the Lawrentian declined to print my editorial because the professor would not be able to respond to my accusations in print. But in the same issue, another letter appeared discrediting my posters because they were anonymous and suggesting that I use the Lawrentian as a more credible public forum! How ironic.

By far, the most interesting part of this affair has been the response to my posters. I would never have guessed that posters simply asking if students felt like their opinions had been suppressed would be considered “inflammatory.” While I heard from a number of people who had experienced incidents similar to my own, I also received e-mails, the content of which ranged from condescension to anger to a threat on my life. I believe that much of this correspondence led to productive dialogue, but considering the fact that these people did not know what the true situation was, it seemed to me like they were very quick to jump to conclusions and judge me. Is this the tolerance and open-mindedness that Lawrence is so proud of? If so, I can’t imagine what intolerance and close-mindedness would be like.

Forum:
No comments have been posted for this story.
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Debate over convocation continues
Addressing a defender of Wilson’s convocation
By Dominique Yarnell

Although Mr. Wilber’s response to my editorial addressing the Wilson convocation had some important points, I believe he misinterpreted the intent with which it was written.

The first point concerns the missing father figure of the single mother instanced by Wilson and myself. Mr. Wilber implies that the father (assumed to be an integral source of income) of these children bares some of the responsibility for their well-being. But since it is rational for him to want to support himself and stay off welfare, the mother cannot be held as solely responsible for her current situation. I agree with this point completely.

The second point addresses unforeseen factors outside the control of a typical citizen. Mr. Wilber points out that increasing costs of living, a sour economy, or the death of the income-earning father could all result in the poverty of a single mother, and that she should not be held solely responsible for her current situation. I also agree with this point completely.

I can agree with these points made in Mr. Wilber’s critical editorial because I was not arguing against welfare, and I certainly was not warning people to “be wary of women who make the…decision to have children…”

My point was to emphasize the need to critically examine the claims implied by Wilson and his supporters. Obviously there are times when, due to forces beyond our control, we find ourselves in situations in which we require assistance in order to make it through. However, there are also times when we find ourselves in such situations when we know, no matter how much we might try to deny it, that we are responsible for being there.

But Wilson failed to differentiate between the two types of situations. Granted, we cannot expect him to prescribe the proper course of action for each possible situation in the mere hour we allot for his speech. However, I do believe that he could have better used at least part of that hour addressing this issue (or any issue, for that matter), instead of quoting statistics without explaining the meaning behind them.

Statistical evidence is extremely susceptible misleading interpretations, as any social scientist or statistician will tell you. Mark Twain once said, “There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.” I believe that in order to think critically and examine Wilson’s claims, we require a more informed argument than the statistics he cited at the convocation.