

Cultural event turnout a disgrace to student body

CSUN and KUNV sponsored a debate Wednesday at Ham Hall between two keynote speakers, Professor Griff, former ex-"minister of information" of the rap group Public Enemy, and Jack Thompson, prosecutor in the 2 Live Crew obscenity case, on the issue of censorship in the recording industry. There were approximately 600 people in attendance that night in a hall that holds over 1,800.

Why such a poor turnout to an event that is of importance to anyone who listens to music—which probably includes 99 percent of the students on this campus?

When Al Gore spoke on campus a month ago, less than 1,000 people came out to hear him. Two weeks ago Hillary Clinton spoke before 12,000 at the University of Colorado.

When the Griff-Thompson debate was held at tiny Pacific Lutheran University (3,800 students) in Tacoma, Wash., over 800 showed.

One student attributed the Wednesday's debate's low attendance to "Beverly Hills, 90210" airing that night. That may or may not be the case, but it puts student response to intellectual events on campus into perspective.

Students at this campus seem to only show up to events when it is a requirement for a class or free hot dogs and beer are offered.

The film studies department hosts a Thursday-night international film series every year in Wright Hall, Room 103. On average, between five and 10 students show up—all film majors. Students attend the Sunday night MSU outdoor movie series.

Why don't they frequent the international series? Because most UNLV students don't want to take the time to learn about another culture by examining a particular art form and are content with their ethnocentric point of view? That isn't a dismissal of the MSU Outdoor Film Series either. It provides a valuable service, but there are other areas of study to be explored by students in addition to American film.

That's not to say the international film series or other events such as the Barrick Lecture Series don't draw a full house. There just isn't a strong showing of students. The audience is predominantly made up of older members of the community.

If there is ever going to be a "college environment" at UNLV, students are going to have to pry themselves away from "90210" for an evening and seek out other ways to stimulate their minds. Students at UNLV want respect, but will never earn it as long as they restrict themselves to strictly classroom learning.

An education is not well-rounded without culture and the arts. Right now, many UNLV students are allowing themselves to receive half an education.

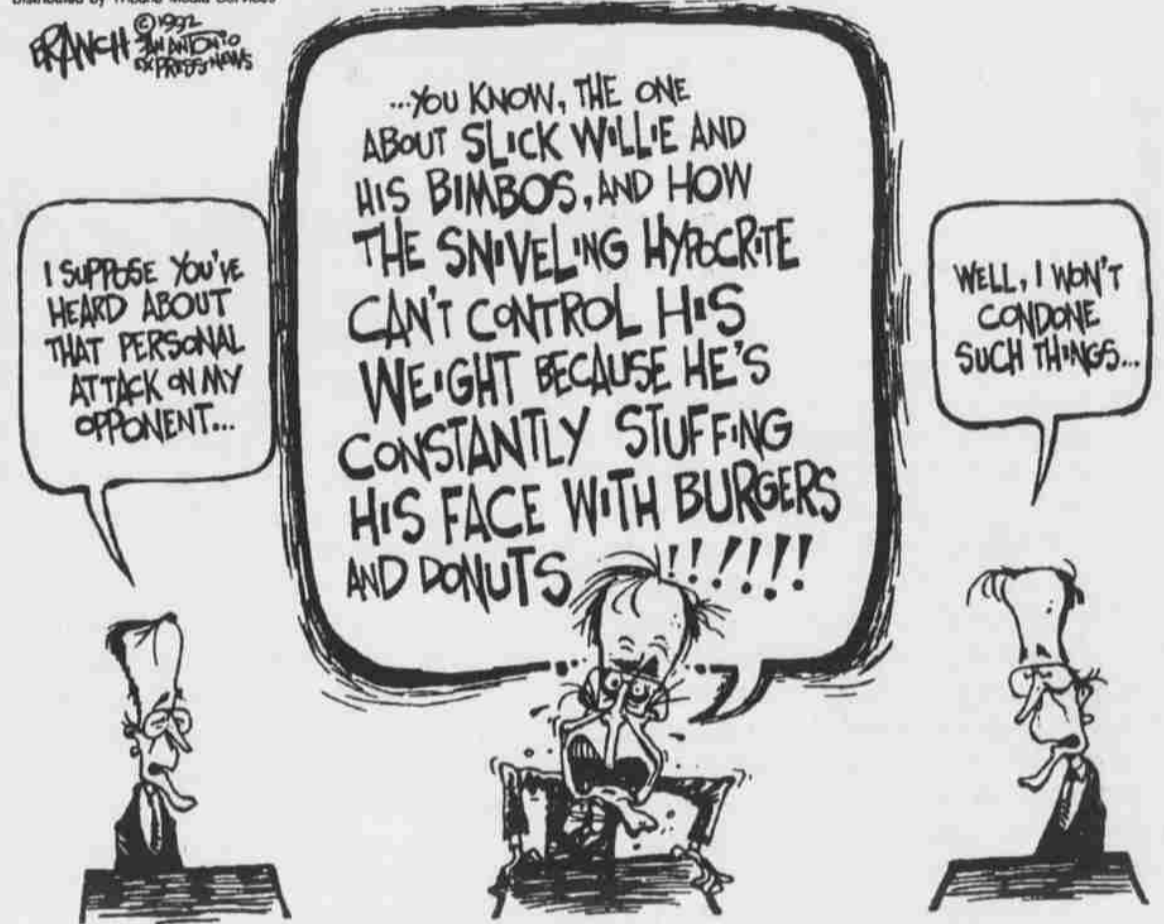
Student Government's Entertainment & Programming Council is doing its part bringing forums such as the Griff-Thompson debate to campus.

You, the student, have to take the initiative to broaden your educational horizons and do your part to help the UNLV name become more reputable and respected as a well-rounded and intelligent entity.

The above is the opinion of The Rebel Yell.

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Education key to nation's problem

The quality of education is a growing concern confronting the nation. Study after study reports that the dropout rate has increased in the last several years and is steadily on the rise. Many of our children can't read, write or perform simple mathematical problems.

Critics blame poor student performance and lack of interest on teachers, television and home life. Obviously, these are important factors in the development of youths today, but instead of laying blame, it's time to come up with sufficient programs to combat this problem. After all, it's not the teacher's responsibility to be a student's sole source of motivation.

Television isn't the only contributor to student apathy.

Home lives vary between different socioeconomic groups. Most family units are not the traditional "two parents, a dog, two kids and an ample supply of quality time."

But if all these aspects are coordinated, the result is bound to substantially lower drop-out rates and rejuvenate our most precious resource—our youth.

First of all, teachers deserve to receive higher wages. Long overdue pay raises, adequate government funding and more liberty in teaching their classes will attract the necessary college graduates to perpetuate a high degree of qualified teaching professionals.

Secondly, television and other forms of high-tech equipment have negative effects on students because they are not properly utilized by educational systems. These things can be used to affect the education of students in a positive way by

using computers, audio visuals and other technologies as learning tools. Students will start see computer in a new light, instead of playing Nintendo and watching sitcoms they will be using these tools toward their education.

Lastly, let's deal with home life. Parents need to get involved in the school system, because they are a crucial entity in their child's learning process. Society is constantly advancing and the educational system is following suit. Parents need to learn to listen to their children. Even if they learned Calculus in high school or not, they can help their child learn by learning with them. Leaving them to explore new territory alone will justify their lack of motivation. If their parents don't care about Calculus, why should they care. And parents also need to give the child some freedom in pursuing different subjects which interest them, no matter how far-fetched they may be.

To insure a future generation that can compete with the foreign nations, our society must spend more time and money on education or there will be no more qualified teachers to teach our teachers, or politicians to govern our government, or scientists to generate new technologies. Before it's too late, we need stop condemning the state of education and start improving it.

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