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Panel good idea but under-representative

In a bold effort to make student concerns a major issue in the upcoming elections for University of Nevada regents, a panel was composed by student government to provide voters with the "students' choice." That was the objective, anyway.

According to Student Government, it was just a recommendation panel; Student Body President Joel Kostman is quick to clarify this was not an attempt to endorse any particular candidate.

The six contenders running for the three regent seats available in November each agreed to participate in an individual interview with a panel of university students. Candidates submitted political resumés, campaign flyers, and position statements to the panel prior to the interviews.

This was a prime opportunity for students at UNLV and the Community College of Southern Nevada to really take an interest in the regents' race. Many of us, not just out-of-state students, are restricted from voting in the elections because we live outside the candidates' districts. What better way for us to affect a position which has such a tremendous effect on us as students than with more student interest and involvement.

But as it stands, the opportunity was lost. The five-member student panel, which can hardly be seen as representative of an entire university system, merely recommended who they believed to be the more favorable candidate in each district. Those who wished to attend the interviews needed to receive clearance from Kostman—who handpicked the panel prior to the interview—if they planned to gain admittance. So, one could conclude the event was less than a public event.

Why isn't it an endorsement? Are we afraid of stepping on someone's toes? Obviously not or the panel interviews wouldn't have been organized to begin with; and Regent Shelley Berkley, a UNLV graduate, would automatically have been hailed as the regent who cares about students.

But instead, Berkley was passed over by the panel. It was inevitable that everyone would be happy with the candidates selected, but if the recommendation was supported by a representative portion of the student body, constituents would have to take notice. A five-member panel can not make this claim.

So what's the point? Instead of getting our feet wet, we need to take the plunge.

With a larger panel of students and a forum for audience members to participate, we can offer stronger conclusions.

The above is the opinion of The Rebel Yell.



In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue...

by Debra D. Bass

It's been 500 years since Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean in search of the West Indies and unexpectedly encountered America. This is undisputable. However, conflicting accounts arise when the question of whether or not he should be hailed as a great explorer for his accidental discovery, which resulted in the destruction of the native civilization.

UNLV student opinions span the spectrum between those who regret Columbus' fateful journey to those who celebrate his exploits in spite of the subsequent occurrences. We approached a number of students with two questions: In your opinion, was America the ultimate discovery or the ultimate destruction?; and How do you feel about Native American objections to the celebration of Columbus Day?

"I think Native Americans have every right to object to celebrating Columbus Day," said Matthew Doubenmier, a sophomore paramedicine student. "Columbus came over to America and actually stole the land from the Indians. Instead of segregating them, we should have found our land elsewhere."

Megan Denio, a senior English major disagrees, "I understand their objections because of the injustices that have been put upon them in the past, but if it weren't for Columbus discov-

ering America, I wonder if I would have the freedom to be a Christian without fear of persecution."

"They [Native Americans] were here first and they have a right to choose not to celebrate it [Columbus Day]," said Keri Blickenstaff, a freshman nursing student, who plans to celebrate the holiday. "I think Columbus should be celebrated because he took a chance and made it work."

In consideration of the controversy, Hansel Klausner, a freshman psychology major, and Merritt Dain, a senior pre-medical student decided on the politically-correct position.

"Native Americans obviously have a right to object to Columbus Day," said Klausner, "Isn't that what America's all about? People having the right to say what they want to say and celebrate what they want to celebrate."

Dain said, "They [Native Americans] have a right to their own opinion."

The replies to the other question, "Was America the ultimate discovery or the ultimate destruction?", were less diverse. Four of the five responses agreed with the history books citing the colonial desire for freedom as a justification for their crimes against the Native Americans. The only person championing the contrary opinion, related his answer to problems that plague America today and not the events which occurred as a

direct result of Columbus' discovery.

"I think its turning out to be 'the ultimate destruction'," said Scott Doney, a sophomore marketing student, "because of our political system, the New World Order, and conflicts against our constitution."

However, Rosalie Cabulong, a sophomore education major, examined the event in retrospect. "It [Columbus' discovery] gave other people from other countries a chance to start off a new life and express their freedoms — like speech, religion, and lifestyle," she said.

"I don't know of any other country in the world where we would have the freedom that we have," said Christina Adams, a junior education major. "I am proud to be an American."

Darv Anderson, a senior biology student, said, "It [America] offered a place where all different cultures were able to live as they wished."

Graduate student Jeff Ommen, studying education, also said America was "the ultimate discovery" because until Columbus embarked on his historic journey "the world was incomplete."

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