

## The Academic Agenda

Part 1 of 2

Guest  
Commentary

EVAN  
BLYTHIN

Well, it's a done deal. Athletics is back at UNLV, and the athletic agenda is more complex and better developed now than ever before. The university will now be fielding credible basketball and football. It is not the scenario that I would write, but it's the play we are, indeed, enacting.

For those who see the situation as athletics versus academics, the situation is deplorable. Crying foul, the opponents of athletics offer a litany of grievances: Sports should not be the number one priority; too much money is being spent on sports; there is too much corruption in sports; the methods of dominance used by sports are too aggressive and fast for a genteel environment. And so forth.

I'm familiar with the complaints; I've made many of them myself. But there are two bottom lines to all of the complaints.

First, academic support at UNLV far surpasses athletic support. If you look at UNLV, you see a few buildings dedicated to sports and scores of buildings devoted to academics. In case you've been sleeping at the wheel, you might want to take a tour of the new physics, new media services or the new classroom buildings.

There is a lot of money going to athletics, but look at the money Marjorie Barrack gives for faculty development or the money the Ham family has devoted to academic facilities at UNLV. Yet everyone is talking about the \$2 million buy-out of a coach. Why isn't everyone talking about how the Greenspun family is shelling out \$2 million for academics?

And second, while there may be lots of possible corruption in college athletics, perhaps we should take a look at some of the corrupt practices possible in academe, like false footnotes, puffed up resumes, the abuse of part-time employees, the abuse of travel money, shoddy teaching, etcetera.

And while academics pride themselves on their gentility, their tenure and promotion standards are often nothing short of barbaric.

One bottom line is that academic programs have been well supported at UNLV. The second bottom line is that whether anyone likes it or not, athletics is an important part of the contemporary university agenda. Academics can cry and whine, but the truth is that if they don't like it, they can call 1-800-boo hoo hoo.

And so, where are we? What's the story on academics at UNLV? I think the truth is, while athletics has a clear and present agenda, academics is floundering in the same sea of dissension found at most public universities.

Instead of crying and whining and looking like a bunch of sore losers, the faculty should get their butts up and noses down and work out a credible game plan for the future. They need to stop their internal bickering and get to their primary missions.

A long tradition tells us that universities have three academic missions: research, teaching, and service. Because UNLV has not had the money to support all three missions, it has tended to hit and miss from one to another of the missions.

For example, in the 1972 code for the University of Nevada System, faculty were told that research was encouraged, as long as it didn't get in the way of teaching and service—obviously the research mission was not an emphasis in the early years of UNLV. And then, because a credible university must have a research agenda, we turned to scholarship.

Since teaching has not be rewarded or honored as much as research, the faculty who came here years ago and who teach and serve well have been overlooked for promotions and other rewards. They are not happy, and I would

Please see Blythin—5

## Senate Actions Deserve Punishment

Have you heard a joke about oral sex lately? How about the latest in anal sex humor?

To hear such high-brow comedy, you do not have to go to your local comedy club. That's right. You can hear these types of jokes right here on campus at your Student Senate meeting.

At last week's meeting, our beloved senators decided to put "senate jokes" on the agenda. When it came time to tell these jokes, two of the most popular topics were anal and oral sex.

What a professional approach. After voting themselves a \$5,000 banquet, the senate narrowly voted down a new jacuzzi for the senate chambers. Some senators told *The Rebel Yell* that the item was "just a joke," a "yearly tradition" used to fool the freshman members of the senate.

What is disturbing about this little "joke" is that in that same meeting, the senate passed a resolution that will pay them \$25 for every meeting they attend. That's right, UNLV students will pay senators \$25 a meeting to "joke" about a jacuzzi.

The most disturbing aspect of the entire Oct. 24 senate meeting had to be the sexual jokes. All of us, at one time or another, have told jokes that have mature or sexual content. We might tell them to a friend or share them with a group at a party, but on the floor at a CSUN Student Senate meeting?

First, it is unprofessional to tell jokes of that nature at a meeting open to the public. When

Straight From  
the Gully



SCOTT  
GULBRANSEN

you're in the position to be a senator and represent your constituents, you should always take a professional approach to the job. To tell jokes of sexual nature was bad judgment and bad business.

Second, the senate is guilty of sexual harassment. In a pamphlet published by UNLV, it lists telling jokes of a sexual nature in the workplace as sexual harassment. By telling the jokes they did, these individuals sexually harassed many people.

Are we to sit back and let this group get away with sexual harassment? It is a serious crime that should be punished in some way. It is disappointing to see the female members of the senate did not voice any displeasure over the evening's events.

The senators will tell you that it wasn't meant to harm anyone. It was all good natured fun that everyone was in on.

That assumption is false. As a student at UNLV, I am appalled by this group's behavior. There is no room for these types of jokes on the agenda of a governing body. To insult the whole student body by telling these jokes at a senate meeting is deplorable.

CSUN will probably read this column, and think *The Rebel Yell* is just out to get them again. They blame the newspaper for all their ills. But the proof of how this runaway organization runs is in black and white. If you were at that meeting last week and heard what transpired, you know that it is all true.

Chances are that most of you

were not there. The student senate likes that. They like to hide behind doors and spend your money the way they see fit. They lurk in the dark like cockroaches looking for a crumb. And they get all the crumbs they want since no one makes them responsible.

The only way to correct this wrong is some sort of punishment. First and foremost, they should issue a formal apology to the students and faculty of UNLV. I will personally make sure it is printed in the *Yell* at no cost. If they are not willing to apologize, those involved should resign their posts immediately.

If you haven't noticed by now, this group needs to be watched. We can not afford to sit idle while they make a mockery of the system. It is your money they spend. Do not let them waste it by telling dirty jokes at senate meetings.

And for our senators—grow up. Save your jokes and pranks for outside the senate meetings. The students of UNLV do not need them. They need a senate that represents the students, not self-interests.

Next time you decide to tell sex jokes at a senate meeting, I'll be there, with soap in hand.

...

By the way: The Student Senate would not allow *The Rebel Yell* into their \$5,000 banquet to take pictures. It seems as though they don't want the students of UNLV to see how they were living it up at Canyon Gate Country Club.

Oh well, it's just your money.

—Scott Gulbransen is the Opinion Editor at *The Rebel Yell*.

## My Thoughts about Interim U...

If image is every thing, UNLV is next to nothing.

There are so many trucks and golf carts darting around campus that a crosswalk and safety patrol might make it easier to get to class.

Tim Grgurich is in. John Unrue, John Irsfeld, Jim Weaver and Rollie Massimino are out. Is there any doubt President Kenny Guinn is a Tark-man?

Massimino is coming to a television set near to you. The man who hated the media is now a member of the media. He'll be working for CBS during the NCAA tournament. No word on how much he'll be paid, but I would have to supplement my income too if I was making a paltry \$375,000 a year for not coaching.

Try explaining the \$1.8 million buyout, regardless of where the money comes from, to faculty members who are told there isn't enough money to give them raises.

Some teachers must have cut side deals with book companies. That is the only explanation I can come up with for teachers requiring six books for one class.

On Target



CHRISTOPHER  
MITCHELL

After a tumultuous two weeks, Halloween Hoops was Grgurich's treat to his players.

Last Saturday, only 7,700 people turned out to watch the most important football game here in recent memory. The Rebels are playing exciting football and winning. What more do

you want?

I didn't receive an invitation to the Student Senate's \$5,000 banquet, but a senator-elect did invite me to the next senate meeting. Lucky me.

If you see a positive political ad between now and the election let me know.

That book you needed to finish your research paper was checked out by someone who wanted to read it just for the heck of it. People that aren't UNLV students shouldn't be able to check out books at the university library, especially since the library has so few books to begin with.

Teachers with "real world" experience are usually head and shoulders above their colleagues who have never been outside of academe.

If Rebel receiver Randy Gatewood was putting up his numbers at a school like UCLA or USC, we would have ourselves a Heisman Trophy candidate.

I hope you didn't spend any money on *Las Vegas Posse* merchandise.

If the regents were not elected by the public, maybe they would quit worrying about getting on TV and start worrying about what is best for UNLV.

If the interim President and his interim assistant have a discussion about hiring an interim athletic director but don't make a decision, what do they do in the interim?

There are so many student government sponsored activities going on around campus I can hardly keep up. Oh, wrong school.

I'd like to welcome all the basketball boosters back to the university. Where were you when we needed you?

It is standing room only in the North Gym these days. I think this year's basketball practices have already outdrawn last year's games.

UNR comes to town Nov. 19 with a bowl game at stake, that's right a bowl game. Those words haven't been muttered around here in 10 years.

Nov. 8 is a chance to voice your opinion-VOTE.

—Christopher Mitchell is an opinion columnist at *The Rebel Yell*.

## The Rebel Yell

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS  
4505 MARYLAND PARKWAY  
LAS VEGAS, NV 89154-2011

PHONE (702) 895-3878  
FAX (702) 895-1515

JAMES EMBREE  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

KATIE LAND  
MANAGING EDITOR

THOMAS LACY  
NEWS EDITOR

SCOTT GULBRANSEN  
OPINION EDITOR

PAUL GUTIERREZ  
SPORTS EDITOR

JOHN QUINLEN  
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

LESLIE LITCHFIELD  
PHOTO EDITOR

MICHAEL RAY CARRIGAN  
PRODUCTION MANAGER

JAN WILLIAMS  
COPY EDITOR

MARY HAUSCH  
FACULTY ADVISOR

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE TYPED, DOUBLE-SPACED AND FEWER THAN 300 WORDS. THEY MUST INCLUDE NAME, ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER. WRITERS AFFILIATED WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS MUST INCLUDE CLASS AND MAJOR, OR FACULTY OR STAFF POSITION. TO SEND YOUR LETTER VIA THE INTERNET, ADDRESS IT TO: [rebel yell@nevada.edu](mailto:rebel yell@nevada.edu)