

**Under the Influence** with Otis & Arthur

# What is all this, then?

## Otis

Arthur, remember Joe Mills in his dapper little suit handing out lollipops when he was running for student government vice president? They even had little smiley faces on them. You had to admire his unabashed determination. The students wanted to see change in student government and Joe Mills seemed like the solution.

Unfortunately, the same BS that has happened before is happening again: one person in student government isn't making friends with everyone else. The current issue at hand is the proposed reduction of Joe Mills stipend for missing three weeks due to a family emergency. No knowledge of his whereabouts were known at the time.

Student government President John Pida wants to make a stand on this kind of issue right away. Anyone would expect to lose their job, regardless of the circumstances if they didn't show up for a month. You wouldn't know about that kind of thing, Arthur,

because you're a momma's boy and never had to work a real job. No one is saying your boy has to resign (imagine that, someone at UNLV resigning

in controversy.), they're just proposing that his stipend be diminished to compensate his absence.

I don't think that's a big deal. Pida has the right idea to set some accountability in that office. After all, student government is accountable for a \$1 million budget. As second in command, Mills has to show some leadership.

I really don't blame Joe as much as I blame idiots like you, Arthur. You should have thought about this kind of thing when you voted. But you were bought for a lollipop. Now you hold the whole Pida delegation suspect to a conspiracy to try to oust Mills? Your grassy knoll mentality can't fathom the fact that Joe is wrong. No one is out to get poor little Joe whether or not he was that popular with his associates. It would have happened to anyone else in student government if they did the same thing. This incident can't go unaccountable, not on the executive level.

Joe Mills should have taken the initiative on this incident from the beginning and just called student government to tell them he had a family emergency and he would be gone for some time. For three weeks his whereabouts were a mystery,

basically nothing could get done because his vote as vice president is necessary in getting things accomplished. He still could have saved face by accepting some sort of reduction in his stipend. It would have shown some character instead of the "oh woe is me" route he tried to take. You fell for it like the lollipop, Arthur. Then he brought a lawyer to the senate meeting to save his butt. This intimidation tactic worked and his stipend wasn't touched for fear of legal reprisal. Too bad he couldn't handle it on the same level that got him elected in the first place.

I don't understand how such a lack of communication exploded this early in the term. Joe Mills must realize that he has to work with these people to get the job done. Now he has to work even harder for their respect. Going outside of student government was wrong and sets the stage for conflicts to develop if problems can't be resolved. If anything, he could have waited until after the vote on his stipend. He did have some support in the senate and may have

come out okay.

Arthur, I know you think student government has the "good ole boy" mentality. You might blow this incident into a tirade about how poor Joe was

just visiting his sick mom, and try to solicit sympathy from our reading public. That's a nice way of avoiding the issue, you are good with that in your column. The fact that Joe Mills was voted in by the students means he is ultimately accountable to us. His three-week absence shouldn't be paid by the students. We trusted him with the position and so far he hasn't produced.

Now he can either learn from this experience and make things happen, or continue the rift in student government. President Pida has shown that his administration will be responsible for itself. I like having an administration that isn't all face value like Boixo's last year. It seems so easy for that to happen because were used to it here at UNLV.

We have seen what happens to this school on the administrative level. It pisses me off how scandals are a staple of this university. Student government is our best way to prevent fostering this type of reputation.

Only if student government is accountable can we demand the administration to follow, otherwise we are hypocrites.

Put that in your pipe and smoke it, Arthur.

## Arthur

You're getting off easy this time, Otis; I've got bigger fish to fry. Some members of student government assert that Vice President Joe Mills purposely disappeared *incommunicado* for three weeks this summer. Mills maintains he was bed-side with his ailin' Mother. That this trumped up absence has become

an issue at all makes me wonder whether student government has anything more pressing to worry about. If not, how can any of them justify their salaries? I wish I knew they were putting as much energy into making sure my new parking fees go 100 percent into parking garages, and not to pay off Massivemino coaching contracts. Otis, I can't believe you think the guy did anything wrong.

Members of Student Government got upset when Joe didn't bring in a note from his mom. Did you catch President John Pida's comment that "...I come from a military background..." (one committing) such an act... would have seen correctional custody for, like, 60 days, forfeiture of pay for a month and there would have been some fines paid..." Like, totally!

Otis, I think the key phrase here is "military background." Just what is the Pida regime up to? Clearly they want Mills hung out to dry, (we may be next!) but why? I remember seeing Mills campaigning last year in his dapper little suit, handing out suckers to all the voters in sight. I'm surprised Senator Leia Fleischman hasn't thought of bringing him up on bribery charges!

Sure, I considered his campaign slightly unorthodox, but that is one of the reasons I voted for him. Student government needed a real injection of fresh ideas and new approaches. Mills' tireless defense of himself only reinforces my belief in his commitment to fair representation.

Through it all, the real question hasn't even been asked: What has happened since last spring to cause this rift between Mills and Pida?

Mills has been so busy trying to defend himself against these outrageous allegations that by this time next month the regime will contend that he hasn't done a lick of work since school went back in session, so that's just one more reason to oust him. Otis, I have to wonder how much student government as a whole can accomplish during this imbroglio.

Little Joey hasn't made friends among the student "leadership,"

that's clear. So what? It's reached the point of ridiculousness when you feel like telling them all to play nicely together and hold hands when crossing the street. What no one is bothering to say is why Mills' absence was so crucial to the running

of student government over the summer, anyway. Judging by the fuss, it seems they suffered by his absence. I wonder how they plan to muddle through without him if their plans succeed, now that the fall term is in full swing?

I don't think there's any issue in this at all, except in as much as Pida and Fleischman choose to create one. It seems clear to me, Otis, that this whole thing boils down to a control issue. The contention that Mills refused to make himself available translates to Mills refusing to jump through hoops for the Pida administration. I can't believe that his presence was so direly needed as to warrant punitive action. The illness of a close family member can be verified and is valid. If student government didn't have quorum to decide issues over the summer, then others had to have been M.I.A. as well. Obviously, they just want to put him in his place because he proved himself something of a maverick. Some find non-conformity threatening.

No, Otis, what really worries me in this whole sordid affair is the clear message that during a time of crisis for Joe Mills and his mother, the leaders who should have been there supporting him would rather kick him while he's down. As a student voter I am very concerned by this trend in our leadership. Is this what students have to look forward to when they need the active support of our student government?

So Otis, I intend to keep an eye on their shenanigans this year. I'm going to be asking myself what you and other voters should be asking: what has the student government done for us this year, other than draw salaries while administering existing programs? Have they managed to mend their differences in the interest of the student body, or have they served petty interests? Have creativity and ingenuity been applied to bettering the lot of Joe Average Student, or only toward making life miserable for Joe Mills? For the answers to these and other questions, stay tuned to the next elections, and the polling results.

"Otis & Arthur" is co-authored by S.T. Sutherland & Vince Caliguire.

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## Letters to the Editor

This letter is in response to an article titled "Merits of Washington D.C. trip debated by CSUN," which appeared in the Aug. 31 issue of The Rebel Yell.

### D.C. trip should be open to more

To the editor:

The lobbying trip to Washington, D.C. serves many purposes. The most important of those purposes is to inform our elected Nevada representatives of

the concerns that this issue raises among their constituency. The 100,000 or so students in the UCCSN system represents roughly 7 to 9 percent of the entire population of the state of Nevada; that translates into one really large voting bloc.

Yes, there is another side to this issue. There should be significant changes to the federal education funding system and its criteria for eligibility. Why not start with trade and career schools? These are the institutions with the highest default rates on student loans. How many millions of dollars are given away each year in

salary and benefit raises to this nation's congressional representatives? How many \$400 toilet seats does the federal government purchase for out-moded aircraft during these peaceful times?

It is obvious in this world that all things are relative. If this country sends fewer people to college, then fewer peo-

ple will earn degrees, then America as a whole suffers even more in the global market and the already faltering economy never fully recovers.

The concept of an even less educated America should never see its way to fruition. The objective of American business owners should be to strive for higher educated support staff,

from the first day maintenance worker to the tenured executive. This is not to imply that every janitor have a college degree, but it would ensure a high caliber corporation that is ready to compete in any market.

David Turner  
Nevada Student Affairs

The Rebel Yell encourages students and faculty to write letters to the editor. Letters should be typed, double-spaced and fewer than 300 words. They should include the author's name, address and telephone number. Writers affiliated with UNLV must in-

clude class and major, or faculty or staff position. Letters are subject to edit for length and clarity. Deadlines for submission are 10 a.m. Friday for the following Tuesday edition, and 10 a.m. Monday for the following Thursday edition.