

Under the Influence with Otis & Arthur

Is there really a need for student government?

Otis

You know Arthur, there has been a lot of talk about less government lately. It seems like the more rules and red tape you have, the less you get done.

You don't have to look farther than this university to understand that. Our student government has grown into a remote island, out of touch with the students it serves.

I mean, do we really get anything out of student government besides bluebooks? And why are they bluebooks anyway? Why not scarlett and gray like the UNLV colors? Why is that?

Arthur used to like going in to the student government office when they gave out those condom kits. Not that he used them, but people in the office thought he was getting some. That was until his mom made him give them back.

Most of us are getting nothing out of student government. This organization could do so much for the students here and yet it amounts to nothing. Just look at all the inner rivalries and tirades. It is an unprofessional environment. Now that the Senators are getting paid, it makes even less sense to have them around.

There is nothing written in stone that says we have to have a student government. Why not, for example pay an outside agency to run student affairs? I mean, after years of having an ineffectual student government maybe it's time to bump it, or revamp it completely.

The present configuration of stu-

dent government imitates the way our real government is structured. Perhaps that's the problem, after all this is a school and that kind of structured management doesn't seem to work in our environment.

Most of the people in student government are involved in Greek organizations. That's only 3 percent of the student population, and yet they represent the entire student body. But I guess that is the student body's problem for not running for a student government office.

The elections have such a poor turnout since not many of us care. We assume it has no effect. It's just the kids playing government.

It's not. They have a lot to do with what goes on this campus, not to mention the million-dollar budget they work with.

The students here like to talk about what this university could be when it grows up. It should start with the organization that immediately runs our affairs. Perhaps getting rid of student government may be a bit extreme, but the present system isn't cutting it. Even Arthur could see that. Change is necessary, at least in some capacity.

It's like in those Pizza Hut commercials, "Change is good, eat the crust first man!" The way student affairs are run, we need the change. If student government was a business it would have gone under a long time ago. We need accountability in that office and the students aren't getting any.

We need something different. Eat the crust first, Arthur! Do it!

Arthur

Here's another fine mess you've gotten us into, Otis! How can you expect me to defend student government when our leaders keep pulling the same shenanigans over and over?

Did you catch the latest? Little Joey Mills, it seems, has locked himself into his office, hoarding all the marbles from his best bud, self-proclaimed CSUN King, Johnny Pida.

It's been reported that King Johnny, clad in purple velvet, stands in the hall outside Joey's chambers, stamping his feet and issuing imperial edicts: "I need the keys to my kingdom! Into the dungeon with you, varlet!"

C'mon, guys, let's stop this feuding and get down to the business of running the government! You give Otis far too much material every week.

I would be more than happy to stick my neck out on behalf of a governing body that was doing its job. Don't we want to have faith in our leadership? I'd like to see John and Joe work together on a plan to let Washington hear a loud voice from UNLV protesting cuts in student loan programs, or some other productive use of their energy.

I feel fairly confident in saying that most of the student Senate probably does go about their business, doing things right, with the interests of the student body foremost in their minds on a day-to-day basis. But regrettably their accomplishments constantly take a back seat to the high-jinks of the president and vice president.

So if I, or any student were to ask, "What has student government done for me this year?", a valid response

might be, "Who cares anyway, it's a lot more fun watching the weekly antics of these two!"

Our illustrious leaders earn their salaries, alright, but as the floor show, not president and vice president. Laurel and Hardy. Martin and Lewis. Mills and Pida.

Otis, I can defend the concept of student government in general, however...

Why would we want an outside agency representing us, as you suggest? How would they know what we needed? Good government is government in touch with the people, responding to their issues, needs, complaints. Good government tries to alleviate burdens and suffering when possible. It strives to raise the standard of existence, whether it be in a campus community, or a national one.

So these are the kind of things our student government should be focusing on: What do students need from us? What can we do to ease the daily, weekly, monthly demands of being a student in the 90s? What do our constituents need that we have the power to provide?

You're right Otis, when you say that student government needs change, but we can't chuck the whole system. What needs change is the idea that King Pida runs a Royal Court, and we are his subjects.

I didn't vote for that.

—Otis and Arthur is co-authored by S.T. Sutherland, Rebel Yell Opinion Editor, and Vince Caliguire, Rebel Yell Opinion Columnist.

Something stinks in the UNLV Student Senate

It happened to be looking over the list of candidates running for seats in the student senate this week. Imagine my surprise to see over 30 students running for Senate offices.

Usually the Senate has some vacant seats in the various colleges, but this session actually had competition. I knew something was wrong, it was time for Vin to go in search of

answers.

I discovered a bill that passed over the summer. It delivers a \$50 per meeting stipend to Senators and a waiver of six credits

a semester. Isn't that interesting? A bill like that passing over the summer while the students were out to lunch. Especially when similar bills have been shot down during the full school terms in years past. Considering there are up to four meetings a month, that's some good money.

Who proposed this bamboozle against the students? Ironically the chairman of the Rules and Ethics Committee himself, Sen. Scott Schwartz, of the hotel administration college.

The minutes of the meeting in which the Senate Stipend Bylaw was passed showed haste in its passing. It even seems there was some confusion on the floor. Senate President Pat Smith had to reiterate the complete bill a few times before everyone knew what they were voting upon. The bill passed 10-3 in the Senate, with one abstention. Only Sens. Laxague, Fleischman, and Moore showed the character to oppose the bill.

I wonder how many of the people running for seats in the student Senate are doing it for the money? One senator in particular, Terence Carroll,

Living at Large
VINCE CALIGUIRE

is registered in liberal arts and is presently a Senator in that school. Now he is an engineering major and is running for the engineering seat. The problem is that a person must change their major officially before they may run for the seat in that college, according to Senate guidelines. Sen. Carroll has not done this.

I suppose that there is nothing inherently wrong with the senators getting some sort of reimbursement for their time. Many of them do excellent work in the best interests of the school, including Senate President Pat Smith, who has been trying to keep things together.

The problem lies in how the bill was introduced and whether it will improve the output of the student Senate. The majority of students on this campus are not aware of this stipend. True, it was not hidden, but why not some discussion or a trial run? Voting upon this bill during the summer was unfair to the students of this university. I know one thing, if they are getting paid, I want some accountability and more importantly, results.

It's still early in the year, but so far student government has been disappointing. While looking at the minutes and listening to tapes of some of

the meetings, I realized that it was all a big soap opera. They have constant dissention, and engage in ego bashing. Basically there is no cohesion whatsoever. Nothing really gets accomplished because of the lack of trust between people working there. It seems like everyone is trying to save their own butt.

Let me make it clear that student government is working hard on accomplishing agendas. The point is, nothing can get done if everyone in student government concentrates on their own agenda. I remind student government officials that they should concentrate on the student's agenda.

Students should take note of those who voted for their own raise on the Senate stipend issue. Now that we are paying for their leadership we should demand our money's worth. Vote discriminately.

I'll be keeping you folks posted if things get better in student government. I know the people involved in student government can get it together. As soon as it happens I would enjoy writing about it.

In the meantime, take heed student government! I'll be watching.

—Vince Caliguire is an opinion columnist at The Rebel Yell.

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