

Editorial

Student government operating under delusions of grandeur

Certain members of student government seem to be operating under delusions of grandeur when it comes to who controls *The Rebel Yell's* purse strings.

Student Body President John Pida, in a summer conversation regarding the working relationship between student government and *The Rebel Yell*, told editor Teresa Hinds he hoped the relationship would be less adversarial this year than in the past.

There's nothing wrong with that hope. We, too, had hoped the relationship would be more mature and productive.

But there is something wrong with Pida's motivation:

Pida said he found it difficult to justify funding a body that historically wrote unfavorable articles about his organization.

The latest demonstration of this delusion of grandeur can be seen in comments made by Steve Hagen, director of the office of student information.

In the Nov. 14 issue of *The Rebel Yell*, in an article entitled "Controversy surrounds Tolbert's appointment," Hagen is quoted as saying, "The Rebel Yell will not print anything on this...I

give them one-third of their operating costs, and if they print this I'll yank their funds. My job is to protect the Senate."

He was also quoted as saying, "I would not

be able to support you guys when your funding comes up ... I don't believe you guys do a job of students serving students, which is the whole

concept of student government."

First of all, let's get the facts straight.

Student government does not control the purse strings of *The Rebel Yell*.

In an effort to guarantee *The Rebel Yell*, and all UNLV students, rights of freedom of the press, financial control of the paper was taken away from student government last year.

A resolution was passed that automatically directed into the newspaper's operating budget 8.7 percent of student fees collected for the entire year.

Student government has no control over these monies.

Of the paper's total operating budget, which is roughly \$163,000, about \$115,000 is generated by the paper's hard-working student advertising sales staff.

The remainder of the *Yell's* budget is financed by student fees, which means the student body funds about one-fourth of their newspaper's budget.

Furthermore, any change in the monies directed into *The Rebel Yell's* operating budget must be approved by a majority vote by *The Rebel Yell* Advisory Board, a body in which student government does not have a controlling vote.

Given these facts, how do Pida and Hagen, or any other member of student government, draw the conclusion they control *The Rebel Yell's* operating budget?

For a moment let's forget the facts and pretend they do control the budget. What that scenario amounts to is

intimidation and censorship.

Are these guys really as clueless as they make themselves out to be, or are they attempting to perpetrate a lie to hide the truth, therefore engaging in blatant threats of censorship?

To illustrate this point, can you imagine what kind of chaos and corruption would reign if the government controlled the operating budgets of the Review-Journal and the Las Vegas Sun?

To put it bluntly, it would be no different than state-run news organizations in Communist countries. In these countries, the press is no more than a propaganda tool for the very government agencies journalists have been charged with being the watchdog over. Which, if Pida and Hagen are to be taken seriously, is exactly what they and their cronies would like *The Rebel Yell* to be.

Is intimidation the type of environment the students wish their newspaper to operate under? It already has to deal with the real threat of the skyrocketing cost of newsprint. More than \$80,000 of *The Rebel Yell's* annual budget is spent on printing, and that figure is sure to climb. That is the only real threat of ceasing publication.

This issue affects the entire student body, not just members of *The Rebel Yell* staff.

Any student on this campus is free to submit a news article to *The Rebel Yell*. Any student on this campus is free to submit an Opinion piece to *The Rebel Yell*.

If we were to operate under the ridiculous assertion that student government can yank *The Rebel Yell's* funding because of negative

press, your rights of freedom of speech would be rendered null and void.

You would not have an opportunity to write a factual news article regarding any assertions of misbehavior by student government, for

fear that organization would yank your student press funding.

You would not have an opportunity to write any Opinion pieces expressing your displeasure with anything student government has done, for fear that organization would yank your student press funding.

Now, let's shift gears and get back to the truth.

It's a given that as long as student government administrations act irresponsibly, *The Rebel Yell* will let you know about it.

The UNLV student body should not be subject to threats—no matter how unfounded they are—of having its student newspaper funding yanked simply because student government has been caught with its hand in the cookie jar.

And officers of student government should be responsible enough to know just what they do control and what they don't control.

But rest assured, if they don't we'll let them know.

The UNLV student body should not be subject to threats—no matter how unfounded they are—of having its student newspaper funding yanked simply because student government has been caught with its hand in the cookie jar.

Pida said he found it difficult to justify funding a body that historically wrote unfavorable articles about his organization.

Look for **Under the Influence** with Otis & Arthur to return after the Thanksgiving break.

THE REBEL YELL

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE TYPED AND FEWER THAN 300 WORDS. THEY MUST INCLUDE NAME, ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER. WRITERS AFFILIATED WITH UNLV MUST INCLUDE CLASS AND MAJOR, OR FACULTY/STAFF POSITION. LETTERS ARE SUBJECT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND CLARITY.

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Letters to the editor

Grad defends Throwin' Rebels

To the editor:

I read the articles about the two UNLV players being suspended. What I don't understand is why only two were suspended?

How could only two get suspended when there were so many players fighting? Then everyone on both teams should have been suspended. I'm not one to be for violence but there is so much a person can take before one gets ticked off.

There is more to this story than what is being presented. The Reno team didn't even have the locker room open for the UNLV players until right before the game started.

No one mentioned the long walk from getting dressed to the stadium, having to walk between the fans who are calling the players names and throwing things at them.

The contact the fans have with the players is very close. This is what really got the team worked up. Some of the black UNLV players were called niggers. That was failed to be mentioned.

This situation was blown out of proportion. Both teams were at fault as a whole. Picking certain players is not fair.

The Big West Conference Commissioner looked at various tapes to come up with his decision. The tapes he watched are only what the camera picked up. Did he take the time to interview any of the players to see why they performed the way they did? Did the Commissioner think of any other way to "punish" the teams? I just want the right and fair thing to be done.

I guess it took a fight to show that UNLV football players have a lot of heart and take pride in their game and themselves.

Alicia Jackson
UNLV Graduate
1995

The Rebel Yell

encourages students, faculty and staff to write letters to the editor. Letters should be typed, double-spaced, and include the author's name, address and telephone number. Writers affiliated with UNLV must include class and major, or faculty or staff position. Writers requesting their name be withheld must include their

name and telephone number for verification. Letters submitted without this information will not be printed. 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.