

Campus community invited to submit opinions

BY S. T. SUTHERLAND
OPINION EDITOR

I'm taking just a moment here to welcome everyone to the spring semester at UNLV. Whether you're a return student or a first-timer, let me join your parents and friends in wishing you a full, successful academic career.

Now that we've dispensed with the niceties, I'd really like to remind all students and faculty that *The Rebel Yell* is your newspaper. And the Opinion Section is your section. That is, the section that members of the campus community should feel free to use in sharing their opinion on matters that are of concern to you or the campus at large.

Yes, the *Yell* runs a Letters to the editor column. And contrary to what some of Carl Tolbert's fan club tried to assert at a student Senate meeting last semester, we don't censor letters. Every "Tolbert" letter we received (before applicable deadlines) was run.

Letters to the editor are, of course, subject to considerations of relevance and timeliness and prioritized in accordance with current events, but beyond that they appear within a reasonable time after we get them.

Because we want you to have ready access to this medium; your paper.

And the student body can't wait to hear what you have to say.

It's important though, to let everyone know that the Letters to the editor column isn't your only option to get your opinion published in *The Rebel Yell*. We also run guest columns. There's one, submitted by a faculty member, in these pages today. You're invited to submit one, too.

Now, don't think you have to write an article based on years of deep research or that the length has to be 1,800 words. But many of the opinions contained in letters that we receive would actually lend themselves to, and be better served by, the longer, more in-depth article format.

Anyone can write an Opinion article, and I encourage more students and faculty to make broader use of the Opinion section. As I've said, it's yours.

(And the student body can't wait to hear what you have to say.)

Just so you know, anyone interested in contributing a guest column and needing assistance in format, direction, or development of ideas simply needs to come into the *Yell* office on the third floor of the Moyer Student Union. I'll be happy to help.

—S.T. Sutherland
is the Opinion Editor

Through the booking glass

BY NATHAN HILMO
STAFF OPINION WRITER

I decided to take the born-again student pledge. You know, the one where you vow to attend every class and never skip, to read all the material the professor hands out and to study every night without fail?

With this new spirit in mind, I headed to the bookstore to buy my books early. I thought one week early would be a sufficient lead to read the first chapter in each book.

Also, getting there ahead of the pack would undoubtedly guarantee a plentiful supply of used books at the bookstore. I had a copy of the courses I registered for in one hand and a basket for books and supplies in the other.

Looking around I could not believe what I saw. Lines were already out the door! I searched the faces of the mob, measured them against the panicked expression on both bookstore employees and realized this was not going to be as easy as I had hoped.

I ran toward the used books,

crossing my fingers. God, don't let them all be gone!

Last semester I remembered spending almost \$250 to buy my books and only receiving \$50 when I sold them back. I hoped someone would get a good bargain based on the recycling of my books.

Just a warning if you are the one who buys one of my old books: the highlighting I did means nothing. I would usually highlight in the library while cruising for my next date.

At least I gave the appearance of studying.

I scanned for the sections containing the appropriate books for my new classes. Last semester I saw little 5x8 signs that struck fear into my wallet: "Book one of six." But I lucked out this semester. I hit the jackpot of book buying. Most of my professors had opted for fewer books! Reading the signs for the other sections, I compared the number of books others had to buy. Some weren't as lucky.

For the record, I did end up buying several used books and I did look at the highlighting

the student before me had done, in hopes they were a good student. I think they should post the grade of the previous owners in the inside page before buying the thing back. The bookstore could charge an even higher price for "enhanced text."

That's not to say that textbooks aren't already expensive. Two of mine were more than \$50, while others were only \$15. Do they price these things by weight?

Maybe it's by the number of pictures or the size of type. Maybe by how cerebral the contents.

But I learned this lesson: the earlier you buy your books the greater the chance they won't be on order. Two that I needed were already out of stock. I guess being a born-again student required at least two weeks earlier zeal.

And just to let you know, the bookstore anticipates your frustration while book buying. They have aspirin for sale at the cash register. I know because I bought some.

Self-service at the big U

In *The City of God*, Saint Augustine notes that "knowledge is valuable when charity informs it." Charity, according to Webster, is "a gift for public benevolent purposes." Augustine seems to be saying that knowledge has value when it addresses public needs.

The idea that knowledge should serve humanity is still alive in contemporary institutions of higher education. The University of Nevada Code, for example, states that the university's primary missions are "teaching, research, and public service." The UNLV Bylaws define public service as "voluntary community activity and public service for which no remuneration is received." At UNLV, as at most contemporary universities, the faculty are expected to serve the larger community.

It all sounds nice; however, a code of conduct can be considerably different from reality. The reality is that self-service has become the primary service of higher education in America. The consequences of intellectual selfishness are dire, and it seems imperative that university communities reaffirm charity and concern for the human condition.

Self-service

Guest Column
DR. EVAN BLYTHIN

Service in the university system has become associated with university affairs; it is in-house service. That service takes three common forms.

First, there is service to the university itself: committee work dealing with such self-interests as promotion and tenure, travel funds, and so forth. These committees are valuable but their first master is the university itself.

Service to academic organizations is a second form of academic charity. The problem with such service is that it, too, is self-service. From the outside, from the community perspective, service to your own field and workplace may be important but it doesn't extend a hand to the community that pays the bills.

Administration is a third form of university service. If a faculty member serves well and does a good job, then that service might ultimately be converted to a paid position. Suddenly what was once a form of charity becomes a well-paid position.

In-house academic service is important but tends not to touch the larger community. The truth of this claim is apparent in the report from the Strategic Planning Retreat recently held at UNLV (August 21-22, 1995). The find-

ings of the retreat return over and over again to the need to reach the community.

The report begins by noting that the university "has an image problem." To correct the problem the report constantly refers to a key word—"community." The report goes on to emphasize the "need to identify areas where our interests and the community's interest overlap."

But the exhortations to charity in the report are compromised by the observation that "closer partnerships would allow us to make use of community support to push through our legislative agenda." Such blatant self-service is not going to solve the image problem. Genuine charity would suggest that the university identify community problems and facilitate their resolution.

Each of the three common forms of university service reflect an evolution, a turning inward, a selfishness, an institutionalization of charity. From the standpoint of the larger community, the general impression is that we are doing a lot of self-service. There are dire consequences to such a perception.

Consequences

Saint Augustine's polemic, *Against the Academics*, and

See Service, pg. 6

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The Rebel Yell

encourages students, faculty and staff to write letters to the editor. Letters should be formatted double-spaced on Macintosh disk in Microsoft Word, (or typed if you are technologically challenged), 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.