

## Service

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Gorky's *My Universities*, illustrate how self-serving educational institutions become objects of ridicule. The more inward a university turns, the more it becomes only a distant satellite of planet earth. Indeed, a recent headline in a local newspaper decried the "Lunacy of Higher Education."

**The university has become remote from the community and derisive language may well become decisive action.**

In China, useless academics were forced to field labor in order to make them productive parts of the larger society. In Cambodia, intellectual types, including anyone who wore glasses (and therefore read), were terminated—not worth a bullet, stakes driven through their heads.

In the U.S., the situation is not so horrific but the contemporary disinclination to fund research and teaching demonstrates an eroding public faith in the value of higher education. It is clearly time to reconsider and seriously pursue the mission of community service.

### Community Service

Service to the community is not just a gift; it is a debt. Students and faculty from private schools owe a debt to the philanthropy that makes private schools possible. Students and faculty from public institutions owe a debt to the public that subsidizes higher education. **Only a total ingrate could fail to see that higher education is a remarkable gift.**

Community service is a requisite mission of higher education. Instead of focusing so heavily upon in-house service, the university would do well to sponsor and honor its missionaries who serve the religious, social, political, and economic needs of the community.

We might start by looking at how students serve the larger community, particularly through Greek organizations that raise money and work to solve community needs. Many faculty, too, work hard for a variety of community service organizations—we might do well to examine and honor the community services rendered by the university.

Unfortunately, faculty service is discouraged by the risks

of engaging in serious community service. Most universities give lip-service to community needs, but the truth is that faculty do not obtain tenure, promotion, released time, or meritorious evaluations on the bases of out-house duty.

Out-house duty, as opposed to in-house duty, means stepping into the muck of human affairs. At the moment, out-of-house community service is discouraged by the common admonition regarding academic community service: it must be academic and relate to a person's field of study. The emphasis is upon academic considerations rather than the needs of the community.

Sometimes the toilet needs to be fixed, and that's the first priority. **Instead of presuming that academic interests should drive community service, we should presume that the needs of the community can be served by the rigor, discipline, and methods that make knowledge possible.**

Allowing faculty greater range in charitable enterprise is one method of expanding the charitable efforts of higher education. Another method of expanding the sense of university charity is to de-em-

phasize institutional giving. As universities have acquired mass, they have tended to focus their community efforts in institutional giving through other large institutions.

At UNLV we go on an annual United Way drive. The president exhorts everyone to contribute, and institutional goals are set. Last year, UNLV established a goal of \$35,000 for its United Way Campaign. At one time the focused drive toward community charity may have been a good idea but the institutionalization of giving seriously delimits the gift.

First, the giving agency, such as United Way, generally takes 15 percent of the gift out of the immediate community. Second, mega-institutions of charity make the decisions about how the money should be spent, we lose touch with the people we serve. Third, the giving agency gets the public relations. Fourth, by handing our institutional gift to yet another institution, we run the risk of malfeasance and institutional ineptness. In 1992, for example, an Associated Press release charged that the United Way "mis-spent" at least \$1 million—whether true or not, the charge certainly reveals a potential

that could be avoided.

With faculty and student emissaries out in the field doing community service, we could channel the money we raise directly into their community concerns. We could focus our resources on one community organization, like Shade Tree, or we might offer our help to various community organizations. **Using faculty and student charitable work as a directional guide, the university could have a direct impact on the larger community and its problems.**

Higher education appears to be serving itself. We need to identify and honor the students, faculty, and administrators who serve the community, and we need to channel our charitable resources to the needs of the community. **To solve its image problem, the university must engage in genuine acts of charity.**

—Dr. Blythin has been a faculty member at UNLV for 27 years. In 1993 he was one of 40 faculty in the U.S. to be granted the prestigious "Community Spirit Award" sponsored by General Motors Corporation.

## New Year's resolutions

BY STEPHANIE REIDY  
STAFF OPINION WRITER

Well, its midway into January and we've all put away the eggnog and ornaments and picked up some slightly less attractive articles: schedules and books. Christmas was great and New Year's was better, but are we left with anything other than bleary eyes and a slightly bloated feeling after the grand entrance of 1996?

Of course! New Year's resolutions! Its a rare individual who doesn't catch that contagious spark of resolve that New Year's offers. Oh, we're new people alright - we're ten pounds heavier, our bank accounts are one hundred pounds lighter, and our closets are crammed to overflowing with useful gifts such as lavender leg warmers from Aunt Millie. What better time to buckle down and make some serious changes?

The number one New Year's resolution of all time that everybody makes is to start exercising. Ring a bell, anyone? Are any of you resolute people out there going to don your spandex and grab that water bottle with your name written on it in pink puff paint? Look out, treadmill, here I come!

Well let me tell you a small secret about exercising. It's hard.

Oh, you'll start out great guns, and at first, you'll feel like a million bucks. You'll get that great adrenaline rush, you'll feel lean and mean. This happy, motivated state will last two, maybe three days if you're lucky. And then the pain will kick in. Every muscle will screech in a discordant cacophony and the Stair Master will make your heart and lungs feel like popcorn kernels on the verge of explosion. Vile smelling sweat will pour down every inch of your body and suddenly, the gym won't be such a priority anymore.

Maybe you'll quit smoking! Oh, you guys are funny. There is nothing more amusing than

to witness a "chain smoker" turned "changed smoker" right after New Year's. I don't smoke, but I like to keep a pack handy to fondle in the presence of these newly resolved non-smokers.

Some try to distract themselves with food, stressball key chains, or other such implements. I've even seen them gnaw pencils to shreds. The abstinent period entirely depends on the willpower of the individual, but I have never seen "new non-smokers" last over a week. I guess the pure bliss of carcinogens clogging your lungs is too much to pass up, even for a New Year's resolution!

Well, we've exhausted the two major health related resolutions (I'd include "eating right" but I don't want to be too negative in one article!) so let's move on to another ludicrous New Year's inspiration: saving money! With the strain that Christmas places on the wallet it's no wonder that many people decide on padding their bank account as a good resolution. The milder cases simply resolve to put away a set amount of money each week or month.

The real fanatics, however, cultivate grand delusions of restructuring their lifestyles into a more economical, penny pinching mode. Some even go so far as to map out "budgets" and other comical savings plans on paper. The law of finances that these folks haven't accepted yet is that there is ALWAYS something urgent that requires every last cent you've got - rent, insurance, food, or a new dress, to name a few.

Savings plans tend to go the way of the dodo, unless you've got some remarkably high paying job, which as college students, most of us do not!

New Year's resolutions are, for the most part, a crock. It's not impossible to keep them, and I deeply admire those who manage against all odds to do so. In fact, the concept of a new start is a refreshing one but can we follow through?

## Escobedo letter challenged

To the Editor:

I would like to respond to the article submitted by Jose E. Escobedo (Affirmative Action Rebuttal, 7 December, 1995) on several points. If Sr. Escobedo has a sufficient answer for any of the following responses, I challenge and encourage him to submit his answers in full, and ask that the *Rebel Yell* publish these answers despite any apparent verbosity.

First of all, I would like to analyze your statement that "during Mr. Lujan's 15-year tenure, not one minority, aside from himself, or a female, was appointed to an executive position." I would appreciate knowing all the facts concerning faculty cooperation with the Affirmative Action office during this 15 year period. It would certainly appear that, during this period, the Affirmative Action office had failed to hire and recruit minorities as per its purpose. However, the relative success of any such program would be contingent on cooperation from administrative personnel and active participation from the outside community. One person cannot do it alone, regardless of the size of his staff or his influence. I would need to see documentation of such cooperation (or non-cooperation) prior to making a judgment concerning this issue, being that I have heard two stories that are completely contrary to each other. I would expect you to back your statement up with such evidence.

Additionally, Sr. Escobedo, your progress in "written recruitment procedures, guidelines for search committees, an applicant tracking system, exit interviews, and an effective selection process" is unseen and unfelt as of the present time by the student

## Letters to the editor

body. I would like you [to] express your idea of progress to many of the students who are interested in taking Ethnic Studies courses, but cannot because the university still does not offer them because of a lack of interest and active recruitment. I would also like to bring to your attention the 2.3 percent drop in enrollment for the fall semester (of which I am certain minorities are a contributive factor) as per the report released by the UCCSN.

This is the result of inactivity on the part of administrators to approach the volatile issue of affirmative action. In fact, I invite you to tell me in person, with the accompanying documentation of course, so that I can truly say that your progress is significant. Rhetoric can only go so far in convincing a person, and it definitely goes nowhere when dealing with me. I would also like to see and evaluate the data that is being compiled by your office.

Your statement that "the most telling statistic is that women and minorities were hired at the same or higher rates as the percentage of women and minorities that apply" is somewhat ambiguous. Let us assume that (being generous) 30 out of 100 applicants for a particular position are minorities or women. Out of those 30 applicants, let it be given that 40 percent are actually hired. That would mean that only 8 applicants would be hired out of 100 (I realize that the actual answer is 7.5 applicants, but you can't very well cut a person in half). That does not reflect the minority population of the state, nor does it reflect the minority enrollment at the university. By the way Sr. Escobedo, how many of the appointments that were made in the past year have been... shall I say it, **LATINOS?**

If Sr. Lujan is truly as you have bravely stated (after he had already submitted his letter of resignation, and not be-

fore, and please don't mistake the sarcasm), then I would wonder why a university such as Redlands would embrace him with eager open arms. Califaztlan has a significant amount of pressure from various entities concerning Affirmative Action, including political kowtowers such as Pete Wilson, who are afraid that a Latino might actually receive an education, or at least an equal opportunity to receive one. Any university in Califaztlan would be foolish to jump into the fire with an Affirmative Action Director who is incompetent or who has a history of inactivity. I can only conjecture as to why he could not perform his duties here at UNLV.

Concerning this "fabric" in which President Harter is attempting so wholeheartedly to ingrain with diversity, I say this: such a goal is idealistic, and, at an attempt to avoid redundancy, foolish. Both you and I know, Sr. Escobedo, that a separate and focused Ethnic Studies program would be more efficient and would spare the faculty from being pawns in a long and drawn out chess game of politics and "task forces."

No doubt that "task forces" are an effort (and this definitely does not go to discredit those minorities who are serving on these groups), but a little more heart goes a long way. Instead of stalling for and making excuses because of time, how about making a little time?

It was a very cunning move to wait until the very last paper of last semester to submit your rebuttal. I am hoping that throughout my career here, I will continue to keep such issues fresh in everyone's memory.

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