

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Jill Leonard
Editor in Chief

Amy Hibbard
Business Manager

About the Collegian: The Daily Collegian and The Weekly Collegian are published by Collegian Inc., an independent, nonprofit corporation with a board of directors composed of students, faculty and professionals. Pennsylvania State University students write and edit both papers and solicit advertising for them. During fall and spring semesters, The Daily Collegian publishes Monday through Friday. During the second six-week summer session, The Daily

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EDITORIAL

Students' inclusion in task force needed

The heads of Penn State's three student government organizations delivered a proposal to Penn State President Graham Spanier's office last week. It asked that Spanier's budget task force include student representation.

The task force decides how money is allocated for the students. The plan to add students to the task force has been introduced to different members of the force with no result. Let's hope that President Spanier seriously considers this proposal. This can only improve the budgeting process of the university.

Though Spanier's advisors are very knowledgeable about the budget, they do not have a direct connection to the student body. They do not always know what students want. Placing students on the task force will make sure that everyone there will recognize their wishes.

The subsequent budgets can be seen with more validity because the students had an opportunity to put forth their views and opinions in the whole process through representation. Having a position on the task force is a huge responsibility.

The proposal said the elected presidents of student government would select a representative, who probably will have

knowledge about the budget process, to be on the task force. This is a great way to select the representative.

Graduate students have many interests, but they do not have the sheer number like the undergraduates. It is easy to ignore the Commonwealth Campuses, but the majority of students at University Park come from them, and they should be included. This process still leaves accountability on the elected officials, and the interests on all Penn State students can be aggregated.

Placing a student on the budget committee is the first step to moving in a direction of shared governance. That term is thrown around quite often, but nothing ever seems to get done to make it reality. Students feel locked out from many of the decisions that affect their lives on this campus, and giving the students a voice on the committees that dictate much of what goes on at Penn State can ease that feeling.

Having administrators and students sitting at the same table and developing comprehensive ideas that best satisfy the wishes of both sides is the way things should be moving. The administration says it is responsive to the needs of the students, and to prove it, they must show it.

Who we are

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Members of the Board of Opinion are: Steve Bien-Aime, Elena Caracappa, Jared Cohen, Heather Cook, Lynne Funk, Alison Kepner, Alison C. Kistler, Jill Leonard, Justin Stranzi and Colleen Sullivan.

Write a letter

We want to hear your comments on our coverage, editorial decisions and the Penn State community in general.

■ **E-mail:** letters@psu.edu

■ **Postal mail:**

The Daily Collegian
123 S. Burrowes St.
University Park, PA 16801-3882

■ **In person:**

The Daily Collegian
James Building
123 S. Burrowes St.

Letters must be typewritten, double-spaced and no longer than 250 words. Students' letters should include semester standing, major and

campus of the writer. Letters from alumni should include the major and year of graduation of the writer. All writers should provide their address and phone number for verification of the letter. Letters should be signed by no more than two people. Names may be withheld on request. Members and officers of organizations must include their titles if the topic they write about is connected with the aim of their organization. The Collegian reserves the right to edit letters for length and to reject letters if they are libelous or do not conform to standards of good taste. Because of the number of letters received, the Collegian cannot guarantee publication of all letters it receives. Letters may also be selected for publication in The Weekly Collegian. All letters received become the property of Collegian Inc.



COLUMN

Doubt is not anti-American

By Mike Still

As a country, we overwhelmingly support the bombings in Afghanistan.

We feel that our military actions are the actions of a "just war," and that the bombings are necessary to ensure American safety and stability. We feel that the Afghan civilian casualties, while tragic, are nevertheless unavoidable, and that any culpability for these deaths rests solely on the shoulders of the Taliban and al-Qaida.

And I stand with my fellow citizens, communally exulting democratic reign over tyranny, compassion over terror, and freedom over oppression.

I try to feel confident that our bombings are the necessary extension of our commitment to a stable democratic society. I reassure myself that the world will be made better, not worse, through our actions. I tell myself that we are doing the right thing. But sometimes, my confidence falters and I feel doubt.

I feel such doubt when I'm reading "A Nation Challenged" in the New York Times and I see stories of families displaced and lives shattered by a misguided United States cluster bomb. The doubt is there when I hear that world opinion of U.S. actions, which one-month ago was a bellowing chorus of support, has started to cool. And doubt shows up as I wonder whether the current bombings will be able to truly dismantle the means for future terrorist attacks.

It's a tough time to lose one's confidence. After all, to express doubt in the just nature of our military actions is to entertain the possibility that our actions may not necessarily be the best possible decision, or to go even farther, that our actions could be morally wrong.

And if our actions are morally wrong, then have we become the sort of "hi-tech bully" that many of our critics claim us to be? This slope created by doubt seems quite slippery.



MY OPINION

For if the American people lose confidence because they are given weak justifications for our military actions, then how can we expect citizens of the rest of the world to remain supportive?

So what does it mean when an American individual feels doubt in our collective military actions? Should this sort of faltering of confidence simply be ignored or overlooked? Should we say "well, if this doubter doubts the actions of America, then I doubt he or she is a real American to begin with, no doubt!" and proceed to marginalize the comments of the doubtful?

Of course not. In this conflict, we cannot afford to allow the doubtful to be marginalized, ignored or simply deemed unpatriotic and un-American. As a country, we must examine and listen to the feelings of doubt that may arise.

Those who are vocal with their doubts are likely raising concerns held, but unarticulated, by many Americans. Therefore, the doubtful must be engaged in a way that clearly elucidates our reasons for the chosen military action.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, speaking on doubts and democracy, said it best in a speech to the Welch Assembly earlier this week.

He stated, "No one who raises doubts is an appeaser or a faint heart. We are a democracy, strong enough to have doubts raised even at a time of war and wise enough to be able to respond to them." It's true in Britain, and just as true on this side of the pond.

If we do not respond to doubts in a constructive manner we will be hobbling our fight against terrorism. For if the American people lose confidence because they are given weak justifications for our military actions, then how can we expect citizens of the rest of the world to remain supportive?

The White House has slowly realized the necessity to engage, and not simply dismiss, doubts raised by Americans, but there is still room for improvement. Ari Fleischer, Bush's press secretary, can no longer afford to marginalize doubters, as he did earlier in the crisis when responding to com-

ments made by Bill Maher. Maher, host of ABC's *Politically Incorrect*, commented soon after the World Trade Center attacks that it was invalid to categorize the terrorists as "cowardly," and that firing cruise missiles from three-thousand miles away was much more of a cowardly act. When asked about Maher's comments during a press conference, Fleischer did not take the opportunity to respond directly to the doubts raised by Maher. Instead, Fleischer sternly reprimanded Maher, saying that Americans must "watch what they say."

Such an act of marginalization does little to reassure Americans about the just nature of our military actions. After all, our fight against terrorism is not a matter of "watching what we say," but rather a matter of being confident and resolute in what we do.

Next week will be the one-year anniversary of the 2000 Presidential Election. I had spent my entire fall trying to convince Penn State students that they should doubt the abilities of George W. Bush, and felt that I had done a pretty good job of it. Today, however, the idea of penning a column where I refer to the president as the Kegmeister and Keggy through the text seems quite inconceivable.

The nature of doubt has certainly changed since that chad-filled Tuesday almost one year ago.

And while the extreme doubt that characterized the approach by many Americans to Bush during his election campaign and during the first nine months of his presidency has understandably fallen out of vogue, we cannot condemn those who voice doubts over our actions in the fight against terrorism. Only by engaging the doubtful in a meaningful dialogue can we ensure that we are truly waging a just war.

Mike Still is a junior majoring in philosophy and political science and a Collegian columnist. His e-mail address is stillstyle@psu.edu.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dialogue among faiths facilitates education

Like Ramy Nasr, speaking for the Muslim Student Association, most of us in the university community wish we could have a zero tolerance policy for expressions of hate at Penn State. The First Amendment makes that difficult, if not impossible. The line between free speech and disturbing the peace narrows in times of national distress, and becomes ever harder to see. Nevertheless, we are in the midst of a war.

Perhaps we could call on those who support the Reverends Smock and Cope financially as well as spiritually to declare a moratorium on religious speeches outdoors on campus for the duration. "A good religious debate," as described by the "Willard Preacher" in Wednesday's Collegian, does not consist in trying to force one's beliefs on other people, nor on distorting history.

We at the Center for Ethics and Religious Affairs located at Eisenhower Chapel, share a deep commitment to

respecting differences, honoring diversity and sharing common ground. Through interfaith dialogue and learning, honoring the differences among us, we attempt to serve as a catalyst for religious tolerance, understanding, and cooperation across campus. It seems we have much work left to do.

Rev. Thomazine Shanahan
Episcopal chaplain

Students must decide whether senate works

A few members of Undergraduate Student Government Senate have repeatedly, over the past few weeks, declared to the world that they indeed are the one and true voice of the entire student body. Now, whether or not that is true is for each individual student to decide on his or her own.

Personally, I'm not convinced. It seems that nowadays members of senate argue more over who represents what than actually follow through on their platform goals. The letter from

Rick Smith criticized student government Presidents Kris Ankarlo and Justin Zartman for working too closely with the administration in lobbying efforts and political action.

Now, while the majority of senate uses its time to argue uncontrollably and point a finger at those in student government who apparently "censor the truth," the CCSG and USG executive branches over the past two months have managed to meet with thirty-five state representatives, two of whom sit on the House Appropriations Committee, and both of Pennsylvania's United States Senators to discuss higher appropriations and federal grants. All of this was done independently without the administration.

What action has senate's Political Action Lobbying Committee taken to combat tuition increases? The bottom line here is that in order to represent students, leaders must follow up their talk with action and progress. Letters to the Collegian criticizing fellow student leaders who follow through with their goals hardly qualify as productive political action. CCSG and USG executive

committees have done their part to advocate for the students. Has senate?

Mike Cooper

CCSG Director of Governmental Affairs

Moment of silence act of faith, not patriotism

Concerning the October 24, 2001 article, "New bill may require Pledge of Allegiance in schools," I have one question. Why is it that our country is just now giving students the chance to have a moment of silence? It should not take terrorism, extreme loss of life on American soil and the beginning of air warfare to make representatives realize that faith is a strong shield.

The separation of church and state has made representatives say that they are encouraging "patriotism." Along with "patriotism" in the past came mutiny, anarchy and radicalism. It is doubtful that representatives are looking for this in light of world affairs. Representatives should just tell the truth. They are stressing "faith." When that

moment of silence is conducted in high schools across the nation, prayer is what representatives are expecting to take place.

President George W. Bush had no problem asking this great nation to pray. On December 13, 2000 he said, "I have something else to ask you, to ask every American. I ask for you to pray for this great nation. I ask for your prayers for leaders from both parties. I thank you for your prayers for me and my family."

In another address given recently, President Bush stated, "And, finally, please continue praying for the victims of terror and their families, for those in uniform, and for our great country. Prayer has comforted us in sorrow and will help strengthen us for the journey ahead." Representatives should follow the courage presented by President George W. Bush and stop hiding behind their term of "patriotism." They need to say what their true point is. Americans, pray for our nation, our government and the future.

Jill Weaverling
freshman-communications