

How SL can help SU

Dear Editor:

Student Life, you want to know how to help SU? How about you start by actually covering the elections. That fact that you expect Student Union to spend thousands of students' dollars placing an ad in your paper to let students know about the candidates is absolutely absurd.

So yes, our decision not to place an ad was deliberate, as we feel that you shoulder some of the responsibility as well. Would it really be that tough for you to contact the candidates and find out what they're all about? If you really think that these positions are important, put your money where your mouth is.

Lately, you've been keen on giving us suggestions, so here's one for you: interview the candidates. Of course it takes time, but I'm sure that you would not disagree that an informed populace is preferred to an uninformed one.

In addition, we had two constitutional amendments that were on the ballot. Where were those in the paper? We repeatedly sent them to your News desk, but to no avail. Earlier this year we managed to get roughly half of the freshman class to vote, probably the highest turnout ever, so something's obviously working. Can we always do more? Of course.

Student Life, do you want to know how you can help SU? Stop letting the news come to you and use your power to inform students.

*-David Ader
Student Union President
Class of 2006*

Get the facts right in architecture discussion

Dear Editor:

Perhaps Mr. Ross Kirby should invest in the time to take a few English classes, rather than spending his time picking on undergraduates. Cristina Garmendia's quote was: "These are all things that we as architecture students have no control over, so we should not be blamed for our 'bad habits.'" This is far different from his version, "we should not be blamed for our bad habits." One version rebuts a previous article referring to architecture students' "bad habits," whereas the other suggests that all human beings in general

should not be blamed for bad habits. In the future, while I realize everyone's opinion when it comes to letters to the editor must be considered, please take the time to print facts and opinions, not slander and misrepresentations.

*-Michael Connor
Class of 2008*

The real story about architecture

Dear Editor:

I feel like it's time that everyone understood the real story about architecture juniors from one. I think it's been pretty ridiculous the stories that have been written, blaming us for complaining, when no junior has even written any articles. Not a single one getting the facts right. You can't understand what we are going through based on observing us, or looking in a course book and seeing what our schedule is, because it's not there.

This year, architecture juniors can be explained in one word: "guinea pigs." Just listen to this: we take 24 hours of class a week for a mere 15 credits. We only get the ability to take one elective during this semester, which is taken up by a need to complete the ArtSci clusters (which everyone is having trouble completing in time). The number of classes needed for a BA in architecture, along with the clusters, makes it very hard to even get a minor in another field.

The advisors in architecture don't know anything about these ArtSci classes or even what clusters are except the knowledge that they must be completed. Freshman year, our teachers told us not to worry about filling clusters and now it is biting us in the ass. And don't get me started if you want to take advantage of one of the two abroad programs that are available. Basically, since we have been freshman, the architecture school has been messing with the curriculum every year and we just happen to be the year that gets fucked the most. By having graphics studio and design studio in the same semester and same days, we pull all-nighters almost half the days of the week. I think it speaks to more than just our bad habits that almost all of us have pillows and blankets under our desks. It was also a large insult to take the time out of our busy days

to make us sit in a meeting and listen to things that we already knew. We already knew that we weren't treating our bodies right. In fact, I fell asleep in that meeting because I hadn't slept in two days.

There are also many other problems with the architecture school. Right now, it is in a phase where all it really cares about is the graduate school (or at least that is how they make us feel). Professors teach both grad and undergrad classes, but show up very late for our classes and don't really spend much time teaching, but rather just assigning things. The fact that they enrolled more graduate students this year than in the past and about half as many freshman this year than in the past is a testament to where their priorities lie.

For now, all of us will deal with the circumstances we are in because it is the subject that we all care about and we don't have much say in how we learn it. It looks like the school is starting to figure out the curriculum and it's just a shame that we got stuck in the worst of it all and suffered with our health. Hopefully everyone can now understand what is going on down here at Givens and end discussion on such a bruise in our education.

*-Dan Kretchmer
Class of 2007*

Antos article was quite excellent

Dear Editor:

Re: "Home, Home On the Range," Nov. 9.

Just wanted to let you know that I loved your Student Life article! Yes, I suppose it's a bit ironic that I work in the Career Center and have previously emailed you about your post-grad plans. But personally, I like and fully understand what you had to say (especially as a psych major with arguably similar amounts of "worthless skills"). I always enjoy your articles and can tell your parents have a lot to be proud of, regardless of how much mac and cheese they cook for you. If you ever need help with your future endeavors, don't hesitate to let me or a career advisor know. After all, we're here to help the law school fools and academic burnouts alike!

Great work.

*-Caryn Alper
Career Planning & Placement*

Don't blame Student Life for SU's failures

By Margaret Bauer
Editor in Chief

In a brief letter laced with cutting rhetoric, Student Union President David Ader replied to Wednesday's staff editorial by suggesting that in choosing not to "spend thousands of students' dollars" running Senate candidates' statements in Student Life, the SU execs are acting in the interests of students.

It's refreshing to hear Ader take such a sharp stand. But unfortunately, SU's failure to publish candidate statements does exactly the opposite of what he claims. By choosing not to better publicize election deadlines and candidate statements, the SU execs are, as we highlighted in our editorial, abdicating their responsibility to represent students' interests.

Ader tells Student Life, "If you really think that these positions are important, put your money where your mouth is." Well, of course we think SU Senate positions are important—we wouldn't have devoted a staff editorial and today's lead News story to covering them if we didn't. We're putting our money where our mouth is every time we write something about Student Union—these pages don't come free.

This fact is acknowledged in Ader's letter, as he charges that advertising with Student Life is expensive. That's true—even after we gave SU a 50 percent discount, a full page of black & white ad space in Student Life costs them approximately \$630. But there's a very good reason for that—without ad revenue, we couldn't print the newspaper. We don't have a huge reserve of cash, nor do we have investments. As an independent non-profit media company without backing from Washington University or SU, we need each issue's ad revenue just to get it out on the stands.

To use a metaphor similar to Ader's, we're not made of money. Our yearly budget—which does not draw upon students' tuition—is approximately \$375,000. Student Union, with a budget of \$1.7 million, has approximately \$4.53 to our every \$1.

So let's say Student Union decided to buy a standard black & white two-page spread for candidate statements for each of the three election periods this year—the freshman class council elections, the Senate elections, and the executive and Treasury elections. This would cost the organization a total of \$3,780. That means the approximately 6,000 undergraduates would pay around 63 cents each for those three ads.

So why again can't they afford to publish candidate statements in the paper? It's unlikely that students would mind a 50-cent reminder to vote on who

will spend the remaining \$155 of their student activities fee.

Ader's complaint about the cost of ads just throws up a smokescreen to obscure the real issue at hand, which is this: Why did the SU execs choose to downplay the importance of elections that leave \$1.7 million of students' money hanging in the balance? If they agree that the elections are important, why leave it up to an independent entity, Student Life, to make sure they're publicized?

Since 1997, SU has prominently run candidate statements for SU elections in Student Life every spring and fall. The organization has also frequently run candidate statements prior to the freshman class council elections—elections which often determine a class's leadership for the next four years. Before 1997, SU regularly ran quarter-page ads several weeks in advance of elections urging students to run for SU positions.

This semester, SU's reminder to students about turning in election packets comprised a short paragraph on the SU Web site, posted on October 27—a mere two weeks before elections. Candidate statements and election information only ran on SU's Web site, not in the pages of Student Life, meaning they were much less likely to reach students than in years past.

SU did send out an e-mail to all students yesterday reminding them to vote and check out candidate information on their Web site. That was a laudable step; yet it doesn't change the fact that the entire process prior to this point was hardly publicized. As we noted in Wednesday's editorial, SU's failure to adequately publicize all steps of the election process disenfranchises students by making it more difficult for students who aren't already SU regulars or friends of regulars to get involved with student government.

Our editorial also expressed concern that SU chose to discontinue the eight-year tradition of publishing candidate statements without giving us any sort of notice. Student Life's advertising office contacted SU about freshman class council candidate statements early this fall and received no response. The ad office contacted them again in October to inquire about Senate candidate statements, and worked with them to secure the aforementioned 50 percent discount on their ads. SU chose to run the back page ad you saw last issue—but even after repeated inquiries, they failed to give us a definitive "yes" or "no" about whether they wanted to run candidate statements.

If, as Ader implies, the choice not to publish candidate statements was meant to send us a message, it didn't quite

work—we just wondered why they decided to stop doing the kind of outreach they'd done for years before this. Ader suggests that we should have interviewed the Senate candidates. This might have been a good idea, if we'd known a couple weeks ago that SU was discontinuing its eight-year tradition of running candidate statements. The editorial board interviews executive council candidates every spring—so we certainly could have done it for the fall election.

But from our position, it seems as though SU is asking us to do the legwork so they don't have to—thereby abdicating their responsibility to make sure the student body is informed about elections. While Student Life is clearly charged with a duty to make sure the student body is informed in general, the burden of increasing Senate election turnout falls upon Student Union, not us.

With his demand that Student Life "actually [cover] the elections," Ader implies that our coverage of SU has been lacking. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. First of all, we are covering the Senate elections in News today; this has been in the works for over a week. In addition, we've already covered the unveiling of the new University Center plans, the Senate's survey about campus ID card uses, SU's revamped Spirit Week, Treasury's budget allocation process, and on Monday we're looking to cover Senate's survey on academic advising. In addition, we've run several op-eds and staff editorials in Forum dealing with Student Union. No other student group has gotten as much coverage from us this semester.

In addition, SU did not "repeatedly" send e-mails about changes to the SU constitution to the News section. We received one e-mail about the changes, which we perused. From the contents of the e-mail, we gathered that the changes to the constitution pertained mainly to administrative functions within SU, not issues relevant to the entire student body. So yes, we chose not to write about those changes.

Our SU coverage may not be exactly what Ader and the other SU execs are looking for—but we've been faithful to our commitment to serve as a watchdog for the Washington University community. We take this role seriously.

Dear SU: Complete silence on your part—until we call you out on it—is not the way to go. Just run candidate statements, or tell us why you've chosen not to. Be prepared to explain to the student body why you're not keeping them informed. And don't quibble with us using political rhetoric that fails to address students' concerns.