

Opinions

The Blue Banner

Editorial

Can we think about this?

In just two weeks, eager smart kids from all over the country will flood the campus as part of the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR)- or as we call it, "taunt the students with a pseudo-holiday." Sure, we are getting Thursday and Friday off, but many professors think it's "an educational adventure" for all students, and therefore, most of us are required to stay and attend presentations.

How fair is it to assign attendance at a presentation during a period that has already been specified by the holy administration as "time off? What about those students who planned a trip home? Sorry, maybe next time.

And while we're off the subject, why should a national conference be an excuse to mulch us all to death? Have you seen the huge piles of foul-smelling, steaming "natural" fertilizer lying everywhere??

How welcoming will it be for thousands of smart boys and girls (not to mention even smarter advisors and professors) to get off the bus at the lovely UNCA to find huge piles of crap everywhere? OK, OK, no more rhetorical questions.

The fact of the matter is, the entire administration has gone completely bonkers over the planning of this entire conference, and a lot of people are getting sick of it. You'd think it was the second coming around here.

It's hard to count the number of faculty members who have approached, called, e-mailed, or stalked us in order to put in a plug for the conference. "What's going in the paper for NCUR?" has become the mantra of all faculty and staff involved in this larger-than-life phenomena.

To add insult to injury, the cafeteria is going to be closed during the conference. What are the poor students that live here going to do about eating? (Yeah, I know, Dante's is open, but residents pay an awful lot of money to be gypped out of 10 meals.)

To get you up to speed here, students are expected to stay here to enjoy the conference experience, but there will be no food to eat during that time. Break out your ATM cards, McDonald's is waiting.

In a joyful conclusion, the conference has left us pissed off, disenfranchised, and just all-around annoyed. Don't cut our Winter Break short, leave us with no food, and still expect us to feel otherwise.

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The Blue Banner welcomes submissions of letters and articles for publication. All submissions are subject to editing and are considered on the basis of interest, space, taste and timeliness.

Letters must be typed, double-spaced, and must not exceed 300 words. Letters for publication must also contain the author's signature, classification, major or other relationship with UNCA.

The deadline for letters and classifieds is noon on Tuesday. If you have a submission, you can send it to:

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Saying hi has never been so hard

Nate Conroy

Columnist

Dilemma: You're walking to Humanities. You see someone from your list of people to say hi to. You make eye contact. All is going well, so you raise your arm, then ooh! Diss! Suddenly their neck makes a sharp turn away from you. You're left hanging with an arm in the air, looking like an idiot.

Dilemma: You're walking down the library steps. You see someone you've met a few times during lunch with a mutual friend. You start to say hi when suddenly they decide to turn away just to make sure Lipinsky is still there.

There is no obvious solution. Waving to someone far off or imaginary could help reduce the loss of cool points when your wave is left hanging. When dissed in mid-hi, saying something is better than stuttering some weird half-hi noise. Let him do what he chooses with your hi.

As any student coming here for the first time realizes, the illusion of friendliness from Orientation wears off quickly. This is not the tightly-knit small school that Orientation-leader propaganda would have you believe.

The safest thing to do around here is stick to head nods and smiles. Guys: give a small, medium-speed, non-threatening head nod. Girls: just smile sweetly. These are the safest

methods of acknowledgment because they don't commit you. If the hi-receiver doesn't look up, screw it, no one saw you do it anyway.

"But, its the south! Y'all are friendly round here. I reckon you can even make eye contact with people and not get mugged down here!" you say. Sorry, people at UNCA would rather run and hide in the Village, lock their doors, do whatever they do back there, then get the hell out of here when the weekend comes. And its not just people in the Village; everyone seems to go by these common laws of saying hi.

There are many styles of avoiding saying a normal, friendly hi. Masters of their technique can employ all of these on any given day:

- Captain Random: You always say hi, he always looks at you like you're nuts. The day you finally decide to stop is the day he decides to get friendly again.

- The Surprise Hi: The opposite of the Captain Random, you never know whether to say hi to him. He always catches you off guard. The day you finally make up your mind to say hi is the day he looks at you like you're nuts.

- The Interloper: You are in conversation and he busts in with a crazy big hi. This puts you in a precarious position: you have to ignore one person or the other. It can be difficult,

especially if they don't know each other. It's like a real live call waiting situation, except you can't make one person disappear with the flash button. In this case, the *Book of Greeting Etiquette* by Jack Aycocock says, "Hi may be said at the discretion of the conversator, but he must make the initial acknowledgment."

- The Overzealous Hi: They say hi to you on the way to brownies, on the way to the pizza, on the way to the condiments, and on the way to the Zuni Stew. The first hi is retroactive when remaining in close proximity to the person. Another is not necessary.

- The Resurrection Hi: They've ignored you for a whole semester, now suddenly ("NATE! What's up buddy?") they're your best friend. "Uh, yeah, what's up?" you say. "Jackass..." you think.

- The Creative Guy: Different greeting every time. "Hello!", "Sup?", "How's the hammer hangin'?", "There he is!", "Naaaate", "Okay, hey." Occasionally grasps for straws: "How's your... er, dad doing... there, yeah."

- Mr./Ms. Frigid: No matter how much interaction you have with them while hanging out or working together in class, you will never get a hi in any other situation.

- Ray Charles: "Oh! Hi Nate! I didn't even see you!"

- Only "Legally Blind": If you go off the beaten path and walk

through the grass, no one on the path has any obligation to say hi. You're too far away, they can't be expected to see that far.

- The Lonely Guy: Thinks "How are you?" means "Tell me everything that has happened in your life lately."

- Born-Again: Thinks "hi" means "Can you give me your testimony?"

- The Slooow Hi: Doesn't say hi until you're already past each other.

- The Shyster: Rarely says hi, but will eagerly approach you... when he's got something to sell. "Hey, come on! Its for Jerry's Kids!"

- The Mooch: The hi-factor increases proportionately with the proximity of a difficult exam in a class you both have. The increase becomes exponential once it is revealed that you made an A on the last test.

- Paperboy: Carries around a piece of paper so he can refer to it when the possibility of eye contact arises.

- Turn the Other Cheek Guy: As soon as you get close on the quad, swivels his head around to make sure nothing exciting is happening in the opposite direction from you.

If everyone just decided to chill out and say hi, none of this would even matter. If you see someone walking toward you and neither of you is in conversation, say hi. How freakin' hard is it?

Next week: saying goodbye.

UNCA campus politics: bound by purse strings

James Hertsch

Columnist

Another year, another SGA. And, as near as I can tell, a wasted year at that. Most of what I've heard come out of that organization, particularly the Senate, is quibbling over stipends.

Why, exactly did we elect these individuals? To represent us. The students. As far as I'm concerned, the Student Government Association this year has done very little for me as a voter, and very little for the campus as a whole.

Okay, they've done a little but. The Theta Chi resolution was necessary—in a fit of responsible governance, members of our Student Senate actually discussed an issue that needed to be discussed.

In the last month or so, I've seen a spate of bills being considered by the organization—most of them with the same student's name listed as both initiator and sponsor.

We've seen the usual spate of organizational recognitions, and the Student Court has done its usual job—in one case, that of a certain student who committed offenses before he came to this school, the Court had to make a particularly difficult decision.

We've seen some action from the executive branch—in the form of various "X Awareness" weeks, and the ever-present Greenfest and other festivals of this, that, and the other.

Fine. I'll admit the SGA isn't as shiftless as I earlier alleged. Yet, I still can't get over the stipend thing. Why, exactly, did my student senate spend so much time quibbling over their paychecks?

The debate over the paychecks, in fact, hinges on one issue: office hours. Looking over that poster on the SGA office door, I find that for some SGA members, office hours are something to be taken seriously, while others consider them less of an obligation.

At other times, there are conflicting definitions in the SGA bylaws over what constitutes an "office hour," and other rules quibbles better left to parliamentarians.

But, I feel that the issue goes a little deeper than that. In examining this issue, I feel that I have a fundamental problem with all the time and attention devoted to the SGA paychecks.

The new Student Senate, in fact, the SGA as a whole, needs to make a few decisions regarding their paychecks. Namely, the government needs to decide between one of three options:

The first of these is to simply cut the paychecks—create a student government based solely on volunteer work, and on true dedication to the student body. This, I feel, is the best option. The main arguments against this option are twofold: the first being that removing pay removes the incentive to serve the student body, and the second being that the SGA members are volunteering their time, and do indeed deserve recompense.

To these arguments, I offer the following consideration: a person who serves his government should not be doing so for glory, or for something to put on his resume, or for money. He should be doing so out of a sense of civic duty—and the pay shouldn't concern him. And, if the SGA member's paycheck is more important to him than serving the people who elected him, he would do both his government and his constituents a service by resigning his post.

The second option I present is the idea of "farming out" the paycheck issue to an independent body of some sort. In this setting, each member of SGA could be externally evaluated for performance of his duties, and, hence, be awarded his stipend based purely on performance, rather than by a vote of his peers.

As with any body, the possibility for lobbying and "good ol'

boys" networks would be present. However, it would be a price worth paying, to keep the issue of stipends out of the hands of a senate which could better serve the students if their pay were decided by another body.

The third option I offer regards revising the definition of office hours: either develop a viable formula for determining stipends based on hours served, and place it in the SGA ruling documents so that there is a concrete formula, or, wonder of wonders, completely chuck the office-hour requirement.

This solution, unfortunately, would create a disincentive for serving the voters. An SGA officer who doesn't have to serve office hours to receive his pay would have no incentive for doing his job—short of threat of impeachment, or removal for office, that is.

As of last week's *Banner*, we had an SGA president staring down the shotgun of impeachment. Like any good politician, or any good elected official, he's going to have to answer some tough questions about what he's doing and why he does it.

I would much prefer my SGA officials bound to their duties by heartstrings, rather than by pursestrings.