

Editorial Page

THE CLARION

March 1, 1974

Debris

by Clint Williams

As Spring Break draws near and I make plans to join the thousands of collegians who annually migrate to my old "home town" of Fort Lauderdale, I find myself day-dreaming more and more of the surf, sun and fun. In these day-dreams I often create imaginary situations. I can see me now—playing volleyball on the beach and being approached by one of my peers during a break in the action.

"Hey man, (puff, puff) you really go to 'Brevard College' like a T-shirt says?"

"(puff) Yeah, you go to 'Large Northeastern University'?"

"Uhuh. Where is Brevard?"

"Brevard, North Carolina."

"Ha, ha!"

"Or about 450 miles south-west of Large Northeastern University."

"How big is your school?"

"Oh, about 470 students."

"470! Ha, ha, ha! I've got that many in my Political Science Class!"

"I know. That's why I go to Brevard."

"Hey, man, don't put down 'L.N.E.U.' It's big, yeah, but you get to meet alota people."

"Well, at Brevard you get to know alota people, including your instructors. Why, I even ate dinner with the President of the College one time!"

"Yea, man, well, that's cool. What do you do for fun?"

"Well . . . we got alota mountains, trees, and green things. We have "forest parties" and sometimes we watch TV at our professors' houses."

"Heh, heh, well, come on, the game's starting again."

And then in the renewed action I'd play with inspired fury to show everyone that Brevard's got some mean volleyball players too.

Censorship

Plaintiff was removed from her position as manager editor of the student newspaper at Southern Colorado State College. She sought reinstatement, back pay, and an injunction restraining defendants from interference with her freedom of speech.

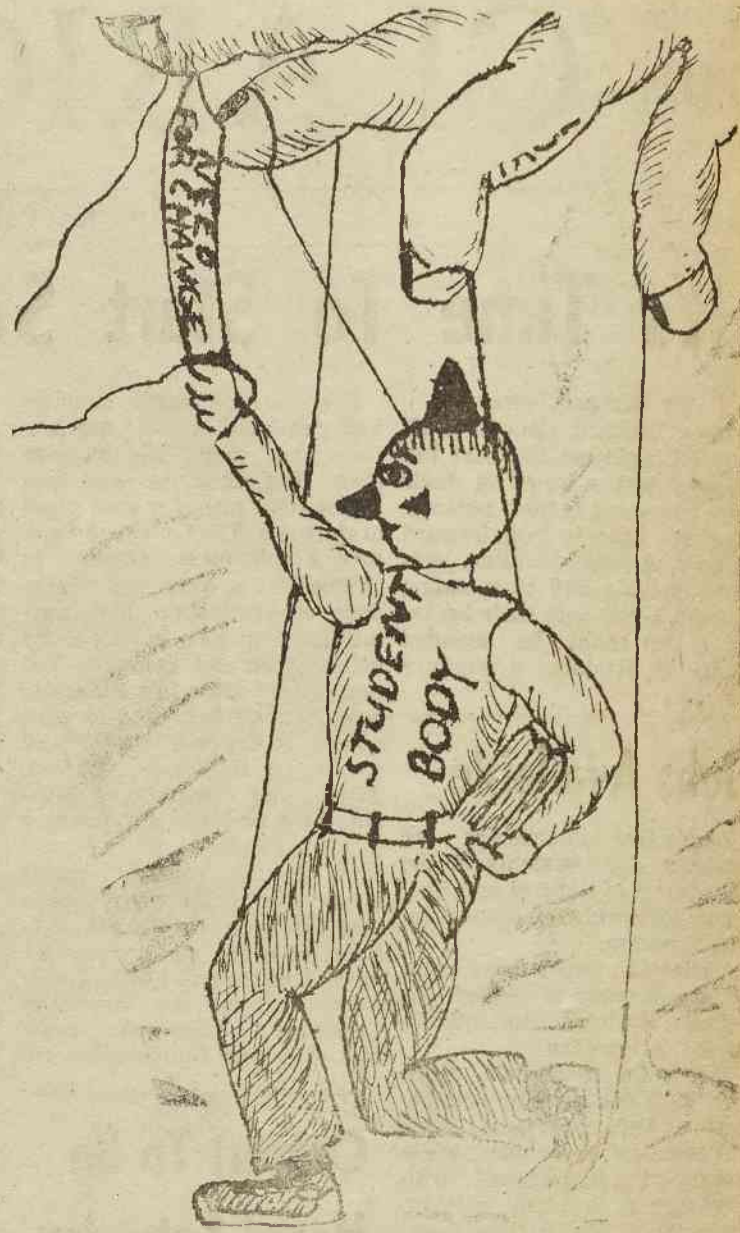
The student newspaper, which had been financed by student activity fees, was published under a new arrangement beginning in July, 1970. Because the student government wished to allocate a greater portion of the fees to other projects, the school agreed to assume the printing costs with the student government paying for staff salaries and supplies. The college president announced that the school was taking over the role of the paper's publisher and the mass communications department would supervise operations as an "instructional tool." The president's testimony revealed that he regarded the newspaper as a laboratory course.

The removal came after the acting chairman of the communications department twice had to stop publication of articles which were critical of the college president, in one instance, and a local judge in the other. It was alleged that the articles misstated facts, were libelous, and violated journalism ethics.

Before July there had been no supervision of student writing. After the first censorship incident, the editor-in-chief was directed to submit to the faculty advisor any writing the students considered "controversial." No attempt was made to define "controversial" and because of that confusion the editor-in-chief was unsure of her responsibilities and had not informed her staff of the new policy.

The court's decision that plaintiff's first amendment rights were infringed and the order for her reinstatement were primarily based upon the lack of clarity in the school's policy and actions. The school had maintained that the paper was a teaching tool, yet had not given instruction in journalism ethics and had left the paper and its staff largely unsupervised; the articles were alleged to be libelous but no proof of that was offered; the paper was supposed to be a forum for student expression yet the school exercised control over its content; and the school's standard of "controversial" material was "ill-suited" to justify the treatment of plaintiff while leaving the work of other students unpunished.

We begin by voting what we are not required to decide. The question presented is not whether Southern Colorado State College may prohibit entirely the independent expression of student opinion on campus. Cf. *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, 393 U. S. 503 (1969). The college made no effort to squelch the student-financed *Broadside* (funded by the student government after the censorship incidents) and we trust that plaintiff has been and still is free to take to the soapbox or handpress to express her views. In addition, we find it unnecessary to decide whether a state-supported college is free to establish a newspaper which it places under the control of its



journalism department, whether such a college may decline to finance a newspaper for the expression of student opinion or whether, once established, such a project may be abandoned. We need not decide these questions because we have concluded from the evidence that prior to the summer of 1970 the *Arrow* did serve as a forum for student expression and the new policy of administration and faculty was not thereafter put into effect with sufficient clarity and consistency to alter the function of the newspaper. As a result, we find, the *Arrow* continued to serve as a student forum, the restraints placed on plaintiff's writing did abridge her right of free expression, and her suspension was an impermissible punishment for the exercise of that right.

Nor can we uphold such conduct merely because it comes labeled as "teaching," when in fact little or no teaching took place. The administration and faculty may have had the best of intentions concerning the *Arrow's* future, but it is clear to us that they did not carry out their plans.

This decision only requires that school officials make a clear choice.

The "clear choice" is between a student newspaper in which editorial policies are decided by the students, or a newspaper controlled by the administration. In the latter case administration policies must be clearly defined and supervised and the educational services actually provided.

Seminar Held In Charlotte

Students, are you involved in or seeking a career in communications? Would you like to find out more about this creative field from professionals? Here's your chance.

The Charlotte Society of Communicating Arts will present 'Communications '74,' on March 9 at the Knight Publishing Company auditorium, 600 South Tryon Street in Charlotte. The annual student seminar is free and will run from 1:00 p. m. until 5:30 p. m.

Jim Zeman, CSCA project leader, explained, "The communications field needs more professionals as well as supportive personnel, such as secretaries and administrators. We are trying to make students more aware of our industry."

High school juniors and seniors and all college students are invited to make reservations now by calling (704) 375-2064, March 9."

or writing to CSCA P. O. Box 4534, Charlotte, N. C., 28204. Name tags will serve as tickets and are to be picked up outside the auditorium just prior to the beginning of the seminar.

An audio-visual presentation, a speaker and business booths will all be available to acquaint students with the many different areas of the communicating arts. Professionals will be stationed at each booth so that students can get a firsthand view and one-to-one conversation about a particular field of communications.

"Advertising, radio-TV, design, printing, photography, modeling, publishing, writing—the list of communications fields is a mile long," Zeman said. "We want to give students a sampling of as many as possible."

No jobs will be offered, but students will be able to learn about jobs resumes and portfolios.

"The seminar is set up so that students have a chance to meet professionals," Zeman said, "and they will all be there on March 9."

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