

# the Seahawk

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## Photo was a bad shot by Wisconsin

BY THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

They say a picture is worth 1,000 words — but what's it worth when the picture is a big, fat lie?

An embarrassed University of Wisconsin has been providing the answer ever since the student newspaper reported a promotional photograph was doctored in an attempt to give the impression of a diverse student body.

A reporter at the Daily Cardinal noticed the sunny visage of Diallo Shabazz, a black student, was reflecting light that did not appear on the white, but shadowed, faces of a Badger football crowd. The picture was the cover shot for a brochure promoting the university to potential students.

Paul Barrows, vice chancellor for student affairs, said that when admissions director Rob Seltzer first presented the image of an all-white crowd (wearing Badger red) for the cover, Seltzer was sent back to find something that better illustrated the racial diversity of the Madison, Wis., campus. The 40,000-member student body is 10 percent minority.

Seltzer's office looked for a suitably diverse shot, but couldn't find one they liked. Seltzer then had the publications

office digitally insert Shabazz's picture into the football crowd.

Adding irony to the issue, Shabazz is a Badger senior who says he has never gone to a U-Wisconsin football game. He is also a leader in a program to improve campus diversity.

The mistake may have been well-intentioned: To draw in a good mix of students. People of color often want confirmation that they will not be alone or unwelcome in a new place. But a lie is a lie. This picture is a lie.

Academia has been tripping all over its good intentions of late — lowering standards, inflating grades, putting up with outrageous behavior from athletes (and coaches). The Wisconsin administrators shouldn't need a textbook to know that the altered picture was a cheat and a lie, not just to the students they were trying to lure in, but to the current student body as well.

The university is now recalling as many of the 55,000 mailed brochures as possible, and is printing 100,000 more with new covers. That new photo shows the Memorial Union Terrace, a gathering place for all kinds of students. They may not all be wearing Badger red, but the photo will be true blue.



Cover of University of Wisconsin admissions pamphlet, which shows the face of Diallo Shabazz (at center left), a black student whose image was electronically inserted into the photograph. The incident sparked controversy after a Wisconsin Daily Cardinal student newspaper noted several inconsistencies in the picture, including light reflecting off Shabazz's face.

## Editorial Viewpoint

### Safe Ride needs jump-starting

It sounds like a great idea: a reliable, efficient way to remove students from potentially dangerous situations downtown or at the beach, acting essentially as a taxi service, but at with no extra cost to the student body. The money to fund this program would come directly from the Student Government Association (SGA). Such a program, dubbed Safe Ride, was planned to begin this semester.

Somehow, it just never happened. Because the \$8,200 the SGA put aside for the project was not enough to hire drivers and people to answer phones, someone came up with the idea that student organizations funded by the SGA should take this duty. Also not a bad idea, only these organizations were chartered in the days when there was no Safe Ride program. The charters do have certain rules and regulations for these organizations, but acting as designated drivers and answering phones probably wasn't in there. The amount of money each organization receives differs as well. If the underwater basket weaving club gets \$300 per semester from the SGA, and the association for oceanic gymnastics gets \$1000, do the basket-weavers work fewer hours than the gymnasts? And what if the gymnasts only have three

members while the basket weavers have 50? These questions must be answered before the program can succeed.

There are many, many other questions. Where will the vehicles come from? The program has been touted as more than just a way to get drunk drivers off the road. It is also a way to get unlucky sober people home, people stranded by their rides or bored by a party. An admirable goal, but what about those underage students who have been drinking? Will the police be waiting at the Safe Ride stops, waiting to catch 19-year-olds who have imbibed a bit too much?

With the recent additions to the underage drinking laws, the local constabulary may have found a perfect way to prove the law's 'effectiveness.' While Safe Ride is certainly not meant to promote drinking, SGA needs to work with the administration and the UNCW Police to ensure riders need not fear punishment for not driving home.

Even with the changes in the SGA's membership and in leadership, if the program were based on solid planning, the implementation of the program would be an easier goal to reach. The idea of Safe Ride is a worthwhile one, but for now, it seems it will remain only a good idea.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

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