

Don't stop the presses: in defense of college newspapers

What would happen if a government official ordered The Guilfordian to move its papers from Founders Hall? That is exactly what happened to the Rocky Mountain Collegian, a newspaper run by students at Colorado State University.



BY MATTHEW JONES
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"I got a text, during one of my classes, from our newsroom adviser who said there was a problem and to call him when I could," said Kate Winkle, editor-in-chief of the Collegian in an email interview. "I never would have expected it to be about our papers being pulled from the racks."

Earlier that day, Larimer County clerk Angela Myers ordered the Collegian to remove issues of its paper from racks near a ballot drop-off area on CSU's campus. Myers, a Republican elected official, said in her order that the front-page photo of a Democratic Senate candidate amounted to electioneering.

The First Amendment guarantees freedom of the press, and that guarantee applies to all publications. Myers blatantly disregarded this right in this latest affront to student publications such as the Collegian.

Thankfully, the Collegian hit back hard. Steve Zansberg, counsel for the company that owns the paper, the Rocky Mountain Student Media Corporation, fired back with a strongly worded cease-and-desist letter.

"We respectfully ask that you refrain from applying a blatantly unconstitutional interpretation of (the statute) by restricting the display of the Collegian (unless) and until the Collegian carries a front-page headline that would arguably constitute campaigning for or against any candidate, e.g. 'Cast your vote today for Cory Gardner,'" wrote Zansberg in the letter.

Myers then reversed her order and allowed papers back on the racks. However, she maintained in an interview with the Collegian that the statute was not clear on the issue.

And, she is absolutely right. But, it should not have to be.

In addition to the First Amendment, both Article II, Section 10 of the Colorado State Constitution and the Federal Tenth Circuit Court's decision in Citizens United vs. Gessler support Zansberg's claim.

Myers' order was just another attack on student-run publications that too many people see as something less than the real deal.

"People think they can stomp over students because they're young and naive, but that's not so," said Early College senior Valeria Sosa, News editor for The Guilfordian.

The threat of censorship haunts many student publications, even occasionally The Guilfordian.

This is particularly worrisome because student publications need First Amendment protections. In many cases, student newspapers are uniquely positioned to break stories relevant to schools. Additionally, they act as a watchdog on campus, keeping school officials in line.

"Colleges and universities tell one story," said Sosa. "They want people to come to their schools. They want to make tons of money.

They're not going to (do that) if a school newspaper is rattling off all of the horrible aspects of that college."

Can you imagine what would happen if administrators could censor The Guilfordian on a whim? What kinds of articles would you find here in the Opinion section? What if administrators eliminated The Guilfordian entirely?

This hypothetical situation has become reality at High Point University. The Campus Chronicle, the award-winning student newspaper there, quietly stopped publishing at the beginning of this school year. Now all news regarding the school comes from the press office run by the administration.

Student newspapers are the voice of a school, and that voice must be preserved. We should all support student journalists in their endeavors to uncover the truth and fight against those who would silence them.

"Just because we're students doesn't mean we aren't journalists," said Winkle. "The First Amendment doesn't apply to a person once they graduate and enter the 'real world.' It applies to everyone equally, no matter the age or experience."



Women deserve to have careers in the scientific community

Men in science, technology, engineering and mathematics occupations have gained greater reputation in many high-tech industries while women have been left under-represented throughout their history.

Only in the past few decades has the feminist movement pitched questions about gender stigmatizing and employment inequality in STEM into the national discussion. In response, the first Association for Women in Science emerged to encourage women to take leadership roles in scientific fields.

"We live in a sexist society, and girls and women are still subtly discouraged from pursuing interests in science," said Dr. Joan Herbers, president of the AWS, in an interview with the American Federation for Aging Research. "The pipeline gets increasingly leaky as one progresses through the educational and employment sectors."

Indeed, according to the Department for Professional Employees, women comprised 46.1 percent of science professionals. Female science and engineering graduates are outside of the labor force more frequently than men.

"Out of 46 graduates in the past 10 years, 12 have been female, (majoring in math at Guilford), which is 26 percent," said Ben Marlin, chair and associate professor of mathematics. "That's not too far off from my graduate school experience."

A new study by Yale researchers suggests that science faculty in all academic institutions have clear bias against female scientists. This greatly adds up to STEM-related intimidation and anxiety among women.

"In academia, I have experienced an intolerable amount of 'knowledge slinging' as I like to call it," said senior biology major Ruby Brinkerhoff. "As a woman, I have often struggled with feeling like my voice and my work is second to men's. However, it is a training that I am trying to unlearn."

There are various reasons which have impacted female students to seek ways to engage in science careers of their interest.

"Although I haven't personally felt discriminated against in biology during college, I definitely have felt as though math professors have talked down to me a bit for taking more math focused

classes," says junior biology major Adele Price. "I also worry a good bit over entering the STEM job market, as I know I will likely have to work harder than male counterparts to be acknowledged."

While women in STEM are undervalued and subject to more stringent standards of evaluation in college and beyond, there are many ambitious female students who are ready to revolutionize women's roles in science fields.

"I think we need to realize the contributions women have made to science," said senior biology major Lillie Reiter. "They are not insubstantial. In order to do that, women first have to realize their own brilliance and stand up for it."

Recognizing personal stories, Guilford's raising of female professionals in sciences highlights their importance in STEM.

They are eager to share their visions and interests.

"My inspiration to be in STEM comes from wanting to challenge people's stereotypes," said sophomore biology major Tasmia Zafar. "I think women should be able to strive for anything they want without fear of failure or judgment. Personally, I have the most passion for science, and so I decided to pursue it."

Influenced by gender stereotypes, some students have shown initiative to fill the gender gap by fostering gender diversity in science fields.

"I have thought about becoming a teacher and trying to (work especially) with young women, so I could empower them to engage in STEM," said Price. "I feel like it is important to talk more about the accomplishments of women in STEM, as they are usually not discussed as much as male STEM achievers."

Learning more about the complexity of this issue and hearing each individual's voice, we come to realize that we need to act as problem solvers, resource providers and supporters of these women who have ambition and passion for STEM. Fighting disparities and challenging academic institutions across the world are the solutions that can increase women's presence in STEM industry.

"According to a Buddhist saying of justice and equality, if you have an ability to withhold your passion then you are the only king of your throne," said sophomore biology major Pema Payang. "And I believe that we, women, have all the necessary abilities to pursue careers in STEM at an equal level to men and are (entitled to) that ultimate throne."



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