

Editorials

Smoking on Campus: Leave it Alone

by James Wallace

In an environment of never-ending academic obligations and an ever-changing social life, such as NCSSM, stress remains a constant. We students are expected to deal with this stress in our best ways possible.

One of the techniques used to deal with stress is the smoking of tobacco products. It has been debated over and over again whether or not the use of such products should be allowed. As of present, it is permitted in certain places, and I support this decision.

Our campus serves not only as a learning environment, but also provides us students with a home, where we are generally encouraged to reside much like we did back home, and not to become a part of a conformed society. Those students who smoked at home should be able to do the same here, their new home.

Let us consider for a moment the naming of some of the areas of our campus. For example, how did the American Tobacco Company dining room, the Philip Morris art studio, and the R.J. Reynolds Pavilion dormitories get their names? Tobacco companies funded those areas of our campus which play a role in most of our lives, one way or another. These companies have invested in our futures and support us overwhelmingly. Would it not be fair for us to support them? Allowing smoking on campus does just that.

Smoking on campus is currently causing minimal physical frustration to nonsmokers, yet many people are against it. I can understand their points, but I ask that they understand mine. After all, there are many things which pose much greater threats and cause much greater problems than smoking. I feel that the best policy on smoking is the one currently in place. At least this way, both sides can be partially satisfied.



Ralph Hise smoking at Wyche House

Is the P.A. Testing "Essential?"

by Meghan Knight

The Physical Activity (P.A.) Test is a set of standards that is used to measure the fitness levels of NCSSM juniors. Consensus seems to be that those of whom this is required would rather spend their time doing something...anything...else. The question at hand is whether or not it is "essential" for juniors to participate in this program.

Let's admit it, with the grueling hours of endless homework, how can anyone have the time (much less the energy) to jog around and around and around the gym sixteen times to fulfill the one mile requirement? The average person gets a little bit woozy after the eighth or ninth lap. They could at least give us some destination; we end up in the same place we started.

And the mile is not the only "event" in this "Let's See How Much We Can Torture the Junior Class" contest. My personal favorite is when they grab hold of the "extra meat" under your arms and on the back of your calves with tongs. Oh, yes. Tongs. Then, they take your height, weight (that you so honestly recorded), and your fat percentage and they look at a little chart that decides whether or not you could stand to lose a few, regardless of whether or not you could trade pants with an elephant or if you are slowly moving from the junior's section to the women's section in Belk's. Having them tell you to either lose or maintain your weight is a little "hard to swallow" when your roommate's grandmother sends you jelly and homemade chocolate-oatmeal cookies. Oh, well, at least the oatmeal is good for you.

So then what? You have to do sit-ups, sit-ups, and even more sit-ups, sending your muscles into shock. (I actually tore mine. Believe me, it hurts.) Then they tell you either to do some pull-ups (guys) or the arm-hang (girls). I don't know about the guys, but my whole body was starting to shake when I finally let go of the bar. And let me tell you, I feel sorry for the fellas when they have to do the sit-and-reach. That's a long way for anyone to have to bend over.

But seriously, it seems unfair to have someone set the same standards for everyone. Each of our bodies are at different performance levels. And who has the time, with homework, clubs, eating, and sleeping? (If you're playing a sport this season, consider yourself lucky. You've already got the exercise worked into your schedule.)

Actually, I generally feel a little more energized (once I quit sweating) when I run, bike, or just do something that makes me hurt and stink. But, hey, I'm obviously not everybody. The P.A. Testing may attempt to promote good health, but it seems to be causing more stress than it's worth. Forcing people to exercise is *not* the way to do it. Essentially, by grading our progress, they are causing immense levels of that "negative" stress they've been trying to eliminate from our lives. But no matter how hard it is for us to admit, they are correct in telling us that we perform better in all aspects when we eat right, are well-rested, and become health-conscious. We're smart people, and we're here to become independent individuals, so why can't they give us the responsibility to take care of ourselves?!?