

EDITORIAL

Time for a change

In our fast-moving, technological age, staying abreast of current information and research is vital. As a result more and more institutions of higher learning are replacing their textbook rental systems with a purchase system.

Although many ECSU students say they are comfortable with the rental system, we believe the system falls short in several important areas.

The textbook rental system, considered "outdated" by many academicians, is a step backward for students and well as educators. The system deprives students access to the most recent information available in their majors, thereby compromising the quality of their education.

Currently, there are students at ECSU using textbooks published in 1990. Can you imagine how much new information and research has been advanced in six years?

If you oppose the textbook purchase system out of a fear of spending a few extra dollars, don't. Eighty-seven percent of ECSU's students are receiving some form of financial aid, which could be used toward the purchase of textbooks. Under the rental system a student with an average class load would only save about \$27 as opposed to purchasing books and selling them back to the bookstore.

Moreover, students need to begin building libraries for reference and support in their chosen careers. A textbook purchase system will encourage students in this area, allowing them the option of keeping those texts they may need in the future. A rental system, on the other hand, discourages book ownership.

When making the decision whether to rent or purchase, we should consider our purpose in attending an institution of higher learning. We want to maintain a competitive edge in our academic areas, staying abreast of the latest research and innovations. Professors in science-related areas say some textbooks may need to be changed as often as every semester. That kind of flexibility is impossible under a rental system, which locks the University into using books that may contain outdated information.

This is an issue the University must address. Saving a few dollars this year may create a higher price to pay in the future.

Isn't our education worth the investment?

ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY

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THE COMPASS

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THE COMPASS welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be sent to ECSU Box 815, Elizabeth City, NC 27909. All letters must be signed and include the writer's address and telephone number. They may be edited for length, clarity, and taste, as well as accuracy and grammar. Because of limited space, not all letters can be published.

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LETTERS

Students were rude at ECSU Showcase

To the Editor:

While attending the Miss ECSU showcase I was disappointed in the conduct of my fellow Vikings. The crowd treated the showcase like it was Amateur Night at the Apollo.

Some candidates were nearly booed off stage and others forced to endure rude comments while speaking and performing. When one contestant was speaking the crowd began to talk, laugh, and intimidate her so badly that she left the stage with unshed tears. Some male students made vulgar remarks as a candidate did a dance in the talent portion of the show, saying "Yeah, shake it," "Do another split," and "Kick that leg higher."

During the evening gown competition students made obnoxious comments like "I'm mad at her for wearing that dress." I heard a male say "I want you" while a candidate was an-

swering a question. The high school mentality of ECSU's students was further displayed by a paper airplane that hit a female student on the head.

The Miss ECSU showcase is an opportunity for the student body to learn more about how they will be represented by each candidate before voting—not an opportunity for ridicule. I was ashamed to be a part of a student body who treated its own students in such a distasteful manner. How we treat others reflects on the University.

In the future I hope that students will be more respectful and considerate of any speaker—from candidates for SGA President to the candidates for campus queen. I doubt any one of the students who made snide remarks at the showcase had the courage any of the contestants possessed.

Yushawnda Thomas

Blacks in America need to understand the value of unity

To the Editor:

The need for unity weighs heavy upon everyone, however, the weight is increased for African-Americans. Everyday in America, blacks face difficult situations like surviving the hardships of the ghetto, facing the injustices of society, dealing with racism, or having to stand in a long unemployment line for a one-hundred dollar check when you have three to five hungry kids to feed.

It would seem that obstacles such as these would bring blacks together, but instead of helping one another, they are robbing, killing and dealing drugs to each other. Some black children grow up in single-parent homes, some grow up without any parents, and some become societal menaces in the mistaken belief that it is the only way they can survive in this wicked world.

Some organizations are trying to bring African-Americans together, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and The Nation of Islam (NOI). The NAACP gives blacks a chance for higher learning. The NOI helps unite blacks through knowledge of self.

Unlike in America, blacks in African villages have a "mutual society," organized to satisfy the basic human needs of all of its members. These Africans truly know the meaning of unity. Their children are raised together, homes are built together, and if someone needs food the others will pro-

vide it by giving half of theirs.

That type of togetherness is what blacks in America are missing.

In the twentieth century Marcus Garvey, a black leader, proclaimed that black Americans needed to return to Africa so they could see who they were and where they originated from. Henry M. Stanley wrote a book entitled *In Darkest Africa*, which showed how the Mazambonis warriors celebrated a bloodless victory over the Musiri. The two tribes settled their differences without anyone losing a brother, sister, mother, father, or other family member. This is because the traditional African sees "the basic unit of life...not as the individual or immediate family, but as the community," according to historian R.H. Pahl.

Blacks in America have too many problems for us to be in conflict with each other. Being in the streets and seeing things in my neighborhood at a young age, I learned how cold-hearted many African-Americans can be. Last year I entered college. My cousin said, "I'm surprised you're alive, I'm surprised you're in college."

Times have changed, because I just turned 20, and for black males in many black communities, that's rare. Malcolm X didn't see black unity in his lifetime, nor did Martin Luther King Jr., and I may not see it in mine but I firmly believe in the motto: *United We Stand and Divided We Fall*.

Renardus A. Glover