

EDITORIAL

Learning by example

College is a door of higher learning which we can open to new opportunities. However, we are sometimes left in the cold when it comes to the treatment we receive from certain staff and faculty members at this University.

Even in a place like the library, where we expect courtesy at all times, we are sometimes treated rudely.

Recently a student asked a librarian to assist him in finding information for a class. Using a cold and unfriendly tone, the librarian berated him and accused him of not clearly expressing himself about what he needed to find. When the student tried to explain what he was looking for, the librarian replied, "That doesn't make sense!"

In the Financial Aid Department located in the Administration Building, a poster on the wall states that we, the students, make up the University. It explains how the University's faculty and staff should give us the best service because they are here to serve the students and not the other way around.

Does the University really live up to this ideal?

Recently, two freshmen male boarding students were leaving for class when their dorm director surprised them with a room check. According to the students, when the director inspected the room as being "untidy," he ordered the two residents to clean the room immediately or they would be "written up," even though the students told him they had a 9:30 class.

The students cleaned the room, but in following their dorm director's instructions, one student was late for class and the other student missed class all together.

Incidents like these can make students wonder why they should struggle for scholastic achievement when their efforts are thwarted by those in authority.

We don't mean to imply the University's staff and faculty are full of tyrants. ECSU has many courteous, caring staff and faculty members who are dedicated to seeing that students receive the best quality of education and who maintain a mutual respect. However, the rude and inconsiderate members are the ones who characterize this University as a "war between faculty and students."

We, the students, learn from our examples. How can we be taught to take our education seriously if we are discouraged from going to class because our rooms may be messy at times? How can we be taught respect if we are forbidden to speak in certain classes because the professors don't think our thoughts are important enough to be expressed?

We appreciate Chancellor Burnim's efforts to change this University into "a student-centered institution." But, in terms of the way we are sometimes treated, we believe he has his work cut out for him before that goal can be reached.

Elizabeth City State University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award baccalaureate degrees.

THE COMPASS

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THE COMPASS is published by Elizabeth City State University students under the direction of the Department of Language, Literature & Communication, Dr. Velma Brown acting Chairperson, and Mr. Stephen March, faculty advisor.

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.

LETTERS

Compass 'one-sided' in its coverage of student mom issue

To The Editor:

In May, 1997 the final edition of *The Compass* reported on an issue that was so contentious it still has the campus community commenting on it. The article that I am referring to was about student mothers. The article did not investigate both sides of the issue. While the students who were interviewed for the report are indeed truly blessed to be able to return to school and have the support of their families, the truth of the matter is that this is not the "norm." Less than forty percent of pregnant college students actually complete their education.

The article seemed to imply that it was no big deal to combine motherhood and college. Working in the Counseling Center and handling withdrawals, I speak with students, both males and females, who are coming to withdraw because they do not have, or their families cannot afford to, support them and their unborn child. They have to go into the "real world" and try to find a job that will, hopefully, provide a decent living for their child as well as themselves. Trying to find a "good job" with limited education and experience is very difficult.

Having a child is not a decision to be taken lightly. There are important issues that have to be addressed before a child should be brought into the world. Financially, how is this baby going to be provided for: doctor visits, food and clothes, are not options; they are imperative to caring for/raising a child. Welfare will shortly be unavailable and without federal, state or local funding, who is going to pay for the initial hospital visit to bring the child into the world?

While many students do not see a problem with having extended family members raise their child while they continue school, the formative years are extremely important in the developing relationship between a mother and child. I have had students to withdraw because of this very concern; they do not want their child calling anyone but themselves "mommy," and they are completely justified because the birth mother is the one who goes

through all of the physical, emotional and mental changes for nine months.

Another concern is health. Far too many young women do not fully understand the importance of first being healthy themselves and the urgency of prenatal care. Quite a few complications that infants and toddlers have could have been prevented through prenatal care. Also, other complications, such as stress and the changes alone that a woman's body goes through during pregnancy, are very draining and simple tasks now become complicated. Walking, sleeping and eating are just a few tasks that become difficult with pregnancy.

When a single young woman becomes a mother her social life is almost null and void. Any ideas of attracting "Mr. Right" are taxed because you have to question whether or not that young man wants the responsibility of a "ready-made" family," especially with all the problems with child support (if you were getting any to begin with), adoption, parental rights (of the baby's father if he isn't), social worker involvement, and his own college career.

Certainly having a baby can be a source of great happiness, especially when it is planned for and wanted. When the baby is welcomed into a home where both father and mother are prepared for it and are committed to its future and their own, it is a real time of joy. In Today's world, where single parenthood is so easy and so apparently acceptable, but, when responsibility and mature behavior have given way to instant gratification, young women especially must think seriously, not just about themselves and their educational future, but also about their child. It is far better to wait for the right time, the right man, and the right circumstances.

Despite hopes and dreams to the contrary, thinking it will be different for me, the harsh reality is that being a single parent is not an easy task and being a single parent without sufficient education only makes a tough situation harder.

B. Angela Holley
University Counselor

Letter to the Editor policy

The Compass welcomes letters to the editor--to express readers' concerns, or in response to articles or commentaries published in *The Compass*. The editors especially encourage students to write letters on issues that concern them.

Letters, which should be signed and free of libelous statements, may be edited for both clarity and or available space.