

The Decree

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NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE

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Student vandals merit expulsion

Last week, some disturbing news surfaced. Some students in Nash were overheard bragging about the fact that they had knocked out several windows in Bellmonte with golfballs. More distressing is that these demented students did not accidentally break the windows; these poor lost souls were actually *trying* to break out the panes.

Behavior such as this is just not funny. It's childish, and these students should be dealt with severely. Not only should they have to pay for the damage, but they should also be ex-

pelled. The college would be better off without these people, if people is the proper term.

For some reason, there are students here who derive great pleasure in saying how terrible a place Wesleyan is. If students were to spend as much time trying to better the school as they do thinking of new ways to vandalize the facilities, they would be amazed at how quickly conditions started to improve.

If we all take pride in our institution, our degrees will be more valuable in the future, and our college experience more enjoyable.



Knowledge worth promoting

Honors program valuable

By STEVE FEREBEE

One of my jobs at Wesleyan is directing the Honors Program. This challenge gives me a great deal of pleasure but also presents two problems. I am a mini-administrator; and I find myself directing a program which as a college student I would have rejected as elitist.

I have grown accustomed to the first problem now, though I still have trouble keeping details straight and forcing myself to do the more mundane, routine paperwork.

The second problem is one I have been thinking about again

Dr. Steve Muses

since some new furniture in the Honors Center has caused some negative comment and boorish behavior. I address those people who have put out cigarettes in the desk drawer, on the carpet, on the chalk tray; those who stole the *National Geographic* World Map; those who have written complaining notes to the honors students on the board in the Center.

The purpose of any honors program is to allow academically superior and motivated students a chance to work together in classes with intellectually demanding syllabi; Wesleyan's program offers these students one course a semester in which to do this.

I have managed to establish a new room as the Honors Center, a seminar room and lounge for these students; I have also managed to create a modest budget for travel and other expenses. In this way, Wesleyan gives a small group of students a bit of extra

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WPE failures not due to subjectivity

Dear Editor:

The question Jeff Jackson raises in his column of March 31 ("Subjectivity mars writing exam") is a crucial one: Why do so many students who passed English 111 and 112 fail the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE)?

Indeed, the Writing Proficiency Committee wonders the same thing. Jackson's answer, that evaluating writing is subjective, and that somehow this subjectivity causes readers to flunk students' essays in great numbers, needs examination.

Let's deal with the subjectivity issue first. Subjectivity involves impressions, emotions, unsupported opinions. It could

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be, therefore, just as likely for a subjective reader to *pass* a student unjustly as to fail one. If readers' subjectivity is the reason for the many failures, one must therefore assume malice, a desire to hurt students, as the motivation for judging their essays unsatisfactory.

We assure you that no such malice exists. The Committee has no interest in piling up a large number of failures. Indeed, the opposite is true. The current

situation distresses us.

Further, there are some elements of writing that are not the least bit subjective. A sentence must have a subject and a verb; subject and verb must agree in person and number; most words can be correctly spelled only one way.

It is true that one person's satisfactory writing may not be another's. We have safeguards against this. Each essay is read by at least two readers. They

must agree. If they do not, a third reader breaks the tie. Then, each failing essay is read again. This, we believe, counteracts the problem of honest differences of opinion as to what constitutes satisfactory writing. The reliability of the committee's scoring procedures is assessed after each administration.

If the subjectivity of the readers, then, is not the problem, why do so many students fail the exam? we don't know precisely, but here are some theories:

- Some students pass English 111 and 112 with D's. This is not a satisfactory grade and indicates possible failure of the WPE.

- In English 111 and 112 students are given opportunities to

rewrite unsatisfactory essays, on the assumption that this will allow them to solve problems and pass the course. One is not allowed to re-write a WPE, but one can continue to take the exam until a satisfactory essay is written, a point Jackson did not mention.

- Students think that writing skills are for English courses only. Therefore, they do not take writing seriously, and may avoid other courses which require a substantial amount of writing. Thus, they forget what they have learned by the time they take the WPE.

There are many other reasons

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