

Forum

EAGLE COUNTRY by DUSTIN HAREWOOD



EDITORIAL

Open disciplinary records necessary

The First Amendment was designed to prevent those in power from squelching public knowledge of what public officials do. In this capacity, the press acts as the public's watchdog. A collegiate paper like the Echo has a duty to act as a watchdog for students on issues of student governance.

The University's new sexual harassment policy is a significant part of that governance, and the Echo has a duty to cover sexual harassment cases on campus, but federal regulations and University policy combine to make that job very difficult.

Hidden from the press

The sexual harassment case of Claryse Avent reveals just how much can be hidden from the press on this campus.

Recent federal regulations have classified student disciplinary records as private educational material that is not open to the press. This ruling will probably be challenged in court soon, but until then, it's the rule.

Under NCCU's sexual harassment policy, which is supported by these regulations, the hearing on Avent's sexual harassment case was closed, and all official records of it are closed.

All faculty and staff involved in the case have therefore refused to speak to the Echo about the hearing itself.

Freedom of speech

The students involved were advised not to speak to the press, even though they are not constrained by the regulations and even though such a gag order violates their right to free speech. Students should be free to discuss proceedings in which they took part.

In such a constrained environment reporting both sides of the case is difficult. The defendant refused an interview, and school officials either refused to talk at all or were so guarded in what they said that reporters came away from the interviews with little informa-

tion about the case itself.

In protecting the privacy rights of those involved, the sexual harassment policy violates not only the freedom of the press but also the tradition of open judicial forums, institutions which should work together to ensure fairness to both sides of a dispute.

Serious concern

If one asks, wouldn't it be better to hush the whole thing up, not to cover the case at all, for the Echo the answer is clearly no.

The possible misconduct of a senior RA is a matter of serious concern to the student body and to the University community as a whole.

Whatever the disposition of the case, it is important for the school to resolve the issue as soon as possible and to clear the name of the innocent.

For names to be cleared and reputations to be salvaged, the rumor mill that has rumbled about the case for months needs to be silenced. Only by making the facts of such a case public can the gossip associated with it be countered.

Publishing the facts of the official record would allow the student body to evaluate the case on its merits and decide whether or not the University has acted fairly.

In the name of fairness to both parties, the University should move expeditiously to resolve the Avent case.

In the best interest of the University as a whole, it should make its sexual harassment policy as open as it can be under current federal regulations, and it should petition the U.S. Department of Education to revise its recent rulings that encourage closed student judicial proceedings.

Delay, secrecy and the gossip that goes with secrecy undercut the University's initiative to end sexual harassment on campus. They send a strong message to women on campus: if harassed, don't tell, because the system will just cover it up.

The Campus Echo is the bi-monthly student newspaper of North Carolina Central University. The paper can be found at several sites on NCCU's campus, including the Alfonso Elder Student Union and Shepard Library.

- Co-Editors - Geraldine Ndiforchu and Terri Boykin
- Entertainment Editor - Robert Thornton
- Sports Editor - Carey Johnson
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- Staff Reporters - Shelvia Dancy, Danny Hooley, Virginia Richards
- Layout and Design - Terri Boykin, Geraldine Ndiforchu

The Echo is published seven times a semester; next issue is out on March. The deadline for advertisements, calendar of events, letters to the editor, etc. is March for the March issue.

Durham to host youth summit

Special to the Echo

Youth from around the nation will be coming together for an all-day youth summit, planned by and for youth, April 8 in Durham. Youth leaders will present a Youth Bill of Rights for consideration by summit participants.

Some of the issues to be addressed include

- * AIDS
- * racism
- * child abuse
- * environmental issues
- * free speech for youth
- * psychiatric abuse of youth
- * homeless and runaway youth,

The summit is sponsored by the National Child Rights Alliance (NCRA). NCRA represents more than 20 affiliate organizations and is directed by youth and adults who have been abused or neglected as children, either by guardians or by society.

Youth from India will also participate in the summit. They plan to raise the issue of the exploitation of child labor worldwide.

Summit youth say they hope to involve youth from the Brazilian

street children's movement and from other nations as well.

NCRA became known internationally when it organized support and legal representation for the 12-year-old Florida boy, Gregory K, who sought legal standing in court to terminate his abusive parents' rights. Although Gregory was initially awarded standing in a ruling reported around the world, the ruling was recently reversed.

Initial participating organizations include Students and Teens Opposed to Psychiatric Abuse, Kids Helping Kids, People's Association for Rural Development (India), Children Opposed to Rape and Molestation, Coalition of Peer Educators (COPE) and Youth Education Life-Line (YELL), the National Child Rights Alliance, and Children's Rights of Pennsylvania.

For further information about the Summit, contact Kate Barnhart, Acting Coordinator, 2804 Blossom St., Brooklyn, NY 11231, phone 718/522-4955 or through the network at 73763 .34 @compuserve.com

Mail all material to:

The Campus Echo, c/o NCCU English Dept.
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The Echo office is located in Room 319 of the Farrison-Newton Communications Building, NCCU.

Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to submit articles, editorials, and pen and ink artwork. Student participation is vital to the quality of the Echo; please volunteer.

Policy on Letters

The Campus Echo welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be no more than 300 words in length. Our editors reserve the right to edit all letters and articles submitted for correctness.

ROXY AND FAYE

Genital herpes doesn't mean he's cheating

Dear Roxy and Faye,

I have recently been diagnosed with Genital Herpes. I have only had sex with my boyfriend. I think he may have cheated on me. What should I do?

Unaware

Dear Unaware,

Girl! Wake up! If you haven't ever had sex with anyone except your boyfriend then of course he got it from someone else!

The problem is, he could have had it for years, so he may not be cheating on you now. But you need to confront him, because if he doesn't know, he needs to. And if he did know and didn't tell you, you need to give him the boot because no man loves or cares for you if he brings you a disease.

He could also infect you with other diseases—like AIDS! Next time, use protection.

Herpes is incurable, but it is manageable. Go by the Student Health Services for more information on Herpes and how to keep from infecting someone else.

Roxy and Faye

Abusive boyfriend

Dear Roxy and Faye,

I have been dating my boyfriend for two years and everything has been going well with our relationship.

He has always had somewhat of a temper but has never attempted to hit me until now. He says it will not happen again, but I am not sure whether he is truthful.

I really don't want to end our relationship because when he's not abusive he treats me like a Queen. What should I do about my boyfriend?

Unsure

Dear Unsure,

There's definitely a problem!! Though he's only hit you once, it is once too many.

Since you want to stay together, we feel you and your boyfriend need to get counseling.

If you don't have the cash, you can take advantage of the counseling center in the Old Senior Building on the 3rd floor.

If he refuses to go, then you need to analyze whether he really cares for you, because obviously you don't trust him.

You still should see a counselor by yourself. Your physical well-being is a lot more important than material things. If this brother doesn't wanna come correct then there's plenty of other strong respectful men in the world.

Roxy and Faye

If you have a problem that you would like Roxy and Faye to answer, please send it to Roxy and Faye, c/o The Campus Echo, room 319 of the Farrison-Newton Communications Building, NCCU