

Editorial error in controversial column

To the Editor:

I would like to clear a few things up concerning my column that appeared in last week's *Pendulum*. When I first read it, I could not believe my eyes. My first thought was that every person on this campus would consider it highly racially toned and that they would also consider me very "stupid."

The column that was printed in *The Pendulum* was my second of five drafts. During the *Pendulum* meeting on September 12, I turned

in the fifth and final draft for printing.

I knew that the title for the column (the printed version) was inappropriate because my point was to ask a question, as it is in most of my writing. I present my side of the issue and pretty much ask, "Am I right?" The column title in the final draft was "Racism and discrimination: Has it reversed its role?"

The final draft had links to further information on the web to back up my statements. I had also

fixed a few errors in grammar, as well as some sentences that could have been considered "racy" as I did not want to come across in that way.

Perhaps my biggest problem is the fact that one of my sentences was totally re-written, with an entirely different meaning. The sentence as printed in *The Pendulum* reads "In the NBA, affirmative action laws say the NBA must hire white players to even things out a bit." If that was a factual statement,

I would have no argument and the entire column would be null and void.

However, the sentence that appeared in I believe all five drafts in the place of the above is "It would seem to me that under the pro-affirmative action school of thought, the NBA must hire white players to even things out racially." Those two sentences have totally opposite definitions.

It bothers me somewhat that I was not contacted prior to any

changes being made.

I hope that the readers will take the time to view my full final draft column, which I have posted on the web.

I hope that they will also reconsider any thoughts they had when they read my column last week and open this week with a fresh mindset. The column is located at <http://www.elon.edu/student/cdejong/pend.htm>

Sincerely,
Cameron DeJong

Racism and discrimination: How it failed to be presented

To the Editor:

This statement responds to the op-ed written by Cameron DeJong and entitled "Racism and discrimination: How it has reversed." This opinion was featured in the Sept. 16, 1999 issue of *The Pendulum*. I write to address some of the points of the op-ed and shed some light on the topic that he failed to present. First I will give some of the background behind Affirmative Action.

In 1965, President Johnson's Executive Order 11246 stated federal contractors must "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin." He expanded the order in 1967 for the benefit of women.

Yet thirty-two years after this order was originally placed, women

overall earn 74 cents to every dollar a man earns. Black women earn 63 cents and Latina women earn only 57 cents. Considering this fact, I find it somewhat difficult to accept Cameron DeJong's assessment that the word "equal" has been "turning into 'special privileges'."

Secondly, he particularly targeted African-Americans and alluded to only two other minority groups as benefactors of affirmative Action. It was very unfair of him to do so, when common knowledge shows us that WHITE WOMEN, not minorities, are the greatest benefactors of Affirmative Action.

So contrary to popular belief, Affirmative Action is not a "black issue;" rather, it is the move to force an end to the disenfranchisement of and discrimination against people who are not able-bodied WHITE MEN, because disabled people do

benefit from Affirmative Action as well.

He mentions the Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* as a "milestone" for blacks and whites alike. This was true in theory, but in fact the actual desegregation of schools did not occur until years after the decision. In fact, many "whites" could not accept the decision, and in turn many "blacks" were hosed down, spit upon, terrorized, beaten, unjustly arrested and lynched.

Furthermore, the very Supreme Court who, in years past, upheld civil rights legislation holds a horrible track record for providing employment opportunities for minorities and women.

Of 394 law clerks hired by the current court, less than 25% are women, less than 2% have been black, 5% have been Asian-American, only 1% has been Latino and

none have been Native American. I know that even the most avid critic of Affirmative Action cannot believe that these statistics are fair.

I just cannot concede to the argument that white men have become subject to reverse discrimination when "they" have not ended the original discrimination that they claim is being countered.

Affirmative Action was established to put people on the other side of the door when the disenfranchised of America knock. It was not set up to crack the door, open it, or let anyone inside of it. Yet even though laws require adherence to Affirmative Action, they have not been enforced.

So do not worry, white men still hold 95% to 97% of all high-level corporate positions. They still make 26 cents more than women do. White-male owned firms still retain 97% if all federal contracts.

Do not fear, "blacks" cannot be hired to a position for which they are under-qualified simply based on race.

I really hope that everyone reading takes the time to find out the facts about Affirmative before they make an opinion. I strongly believe that with all the facts considered, it is clear that the many white business and school administrators in the United States are still not completely prepared to include everyone in the "American Dream." Because of this, I believe that they must be forced by law to do so.

Thank you for reading this, I welcome everyone to visit the websites of the National Organization for Women and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. My statistics come from the NOW site.

Sincerely,
Benita Appiah-Pinkrah

A slight difference of opinion

To the Editor:

No disrespect intended to you Mr. DeJong, but your argument makes no sense to me. It is whites that have been the beneficiaries of strong education, college admissions, hiring, preferential treatment and promotions since the beginning of America. And to say that the barrier of racism and discrimination has been reversed is to acknowledge something powerful and important.

You and I, as white men, will never have any real understanding of what racism and discrimination truly means.

However, here are a few questions for us to consider: What percentage of white males are CEO's of major corporations? What percentage of white males have been president of the United States? What percentage sit in Congress? What percentage are employed, period?

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, minorities that receive the chance to finish undergraduate

school have an average earnings increase of 9%. However, a minority with a college degree still earns less money than a Non-Hispanic White with just a high school diploma. White males also account for only 42% of the work force while holding 97% of the top CEO positions in corporate America. But because that is covertly done, we need affirmative action.

Mr. DeJong, you and I are very fortunate that we will never know what its like to watch a woman clench her purse in fear as we walk by. We will never know what its like to be a young black child walking into a candy store and be followed around as if we were a thief not a child. We will never know what its like not to be able to hail a cab late one evening.

We will never know, because while we may not directly be responsible for the shackles of poverty and discrimination, the fundamental fact is that we have benefited from it and still benefit from

it to this day.

There are not enough pages in this paper to describe all the rationale for affirmative action. However, on a few final thoughts... We cannot expect gaps in income, status and perceptions to be fixed by time alone. It is our duty, as Americans; to encourage diversity in a nation created for all free women and men. Your point about how our nation should become color blind couldn't be farther from the truth. It is our responsibility to see all colors and appreciate and love them for what they are...not to have them fade to gray.

So if affirmative action can in any way increase the amount of diversity that I experience in college or in the workplace, it only has me scratching my head saying, "What other good things can we be doing?"

Sincerely,
Tait Arend
Director of Leadership
Development



Got something on
your mind?

Write a Letter to
the Editor

Mail letters to 7012 Campus
Box or drop them off at
The Pendulum office
(Moseley Center 233) by noon
Monday. You must include
your name and phone
number.