

Second Opinion

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This is your world, know what is going on

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Managing Editor

□ Are young Americans really as ignorant as we think?

Since the September 11 terrorist attacks, I have been forced to accept many unsettling and disturbing truths. To begin with, we are not as safe as we think we are.

And yes, we have a long road ahead of us to end terrorism. Perhaps the most difficult to understand is the fact that thousands of innocent Americans lost their lives at the hand of a madman who is being purposely hidden by another

country.

These are all things that will take considerable time and effort to rectify, but there is one other realization that is equally disturbing but significantly easier to correct.

Americans, particularly young Americans, are the most ignorant citizens in the world when it comes to knowing general facts about international affairs and their own government.

If ever present in a room filled with "intelligent" college students, you will quickly be given an answer if you ask about the score of the Braves

game or the hours of the ABC store.

However, try asking them to name John McCain's most profiled platform or to list Afghanistan's neighboring countries, chances are you will

of Clinique lipstick but could not utter a word when asked about President Bush's stem cell research policy, the Fed's dropping of interest rates or our country's involvement in Israel.

"Can someone please tell me when it went out of style to be knowledgeable about what's going on the world?"

Why is this? Why don't young Americans care about what is going on around them?

It only takes thirty minutes to watch the news or skim the newspaper.

Here is another

idea: Listen to the news when it comes on the radio instead of changing the station to avoid it like the plague.

Can someone please tell me when it went out of style to be knowledgeable about what's going on the world?

I was absolutely amazed when I sat with a group of friends, who happen to be "intelligent" college students. A couple of them did not know who Colin Powell is, and some of the others thought Israel was next to China.

The most disturbing comment I heard was, "Hey, there's Bush. Where's Hillary? Doesn't the First Lady always stand beside the president when he's on T.V.?"

Got an answer?

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The Campus Forum

Condolences from around the world, former visiting professors from China

The letters below were sent to Dr. Carolyn Happer, professor of history, by Dr. Lan Tian, and Dr. Jia Xiuhai, both exchange professors from Dongbei University in China. Both professors visited Meredith to teach and study in 1999 and 2000, respectively. In the letters they express their deep sorrow for the tragedies of Sept. 11, 2001 in New York City and Washington, D.C.

Dear Carolyn,

It is a great relief that my dearest Lao Taitai and her family are fine.

I am terribly sorry to hear such bad news. I am sorry for the innocent victims.

Take care of yourself, and don't let me worry about you. You know I love you!

Tian

Hi Dr. Happer,

We are very sad and shocked to have heard and seen from TV the terrorist attacks on several U.S. cities.

We express our heartfelt

condolences to the families of all the deceased.

We love American people, and we ABSOLUTELY don't want to see any harms that are done to your people.

Hope you'll soon recover from your deep sorrow.

This is Jia with a sad heart.

An inexpensive education cannot be a quality education, says alumni

Dear Editor:

I read with interest the editorial in the last issue of your paper from sophomore Terry Howell regarding the tuition increase for this year and the coming years.

As a businesswoman, the current President of the Alumnae Association and the mother of a 1999 graduate as well as (and particularly) a high school senior and freshman, I too felt compelled to address this issue.

When I applied to Meredith, I also applied to Duke and Wake Forest.

At the time, these three schools were comparable in the SAT averages of their incoming students and in the respect with which they were held in

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the community.

I don't remember what the tuition differences were then, but they were probably relative to what they are this year.

Over the past 10 years, I have sat in Alumnae meetings and been appalled at the widening gap between our tuition and those of the schools we formerly competed against.

It seemed to me and other alumnae that our focus had switched from being a school of the highest quality to being a school of the largest enrollment.

The message we were sending was that we were a cheaper alternative to a first class education.

The SAT scores of our incoming students were dropping and instead of competing with Duke, UNCCH, NCSU

and Wake Forest for students, we were competing with second tier public and private schools.

We were trying to be everything to everyone instead of focusing on our traditional strengths: faculty/student ratio, demanding academics including the sciences and a nurturing environment where young women could develop leadership skills in a way that was impossible on a coed campus. I believe these should still be our strengths.

A quality private school education is expensive; there is no way around it.

An inexpensive private school education cannot be a quality education.

Dr. Hartford's initiatives are imperative to bring us back to where we were 30 years ago and then move beyond that.

I believe the value of my degree has been diminished over the past years and I am excited about seeing it restored.

No one will pay a higher price for this than me if I enroll two daughters at Meredith over the next five years.

Although we are now in different times, there should be no difference in the relevant quality of a Meredith education.

Our task as alumnae is to raise more money to help the

college attract the best and brightest students regardless of financial resources just as all quality private schools must do.

This is a difficult goal. Dr. Hartford has also had to make difficult and unpopular decisions in order to achieve her goals.

However, I believe all of us have no choice but to pursue these goals if we want to preserve our heritage.

Claire Sullivan Langford
Class of 1972