

It's Valentines Day!!
*Know anyone struck by cupid's arrow?
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Ever wondered what S&M was like before it was S&M?

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GET THE SCOOP ON LOVE FROM THE TWO-HEADED COLUMNISTS

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Class of '04 Speaks Out:

Perspectives on College and Senioritis

BY: SEUN AJIBOYE

By now, seniors have completed their college applications and are working on getting money to finance their education at institutions of higher learning. Some seniors have already been accepted to college and know where they will spend the next four years of their lives, while others have to wait until the spring to hear from the schools they applied to. I talked to four seniors-Ashlie Canipe, Emily Steinbaugh, Andrew Tamayo, and Luke Oltmans-about their experiences and thoughts on applying to college and on being second semester seniors.

Of the four seniors, only Andrew applied early to a school. He was accepted to

NC State but will make a decision on whether or not to go after he hears from the other schools he applied to. For Andrew, applying to college meant composing and perfecting endless essays and filling out the same information over and over again. He finds that applying for scholarships is just as long and tedious. While preparing for college has been quite the thorn in Andrew's side, he is really enjoying "the lackadaisical and whimsical way of life" as a second semester senior. He has more free time but finds himself going to bed later as he opts to spend his days enjoying that free time and his late nights doing homework.

Ashlie did not apply early to any schools but wishes that

she had, just to have the peace of knowing she was in somewhere. She says that at least she will not be confined to a school if she decides to change her mind. Right now she wants to attend UNC. Ashlie is enjoying life as a second semester senior because she finally has time to focus on the classes that she really enjoys, such as Brit Lit. With five classes, a seminar, and an informal seminar, she does not see herself as slack. She is going to bed later than she did last year but admits that it is probably by choice rather than necessity.

While Ashlie thought the application process was easier than she expected, Emily found the process to be quite draining, especially over win-

ter break. She has been accepted to Appalachian State, so she has a measure of security but wants to attend either UNC or Furman in South Carolina. Along with Andrew, she finds getting money very frustrating but is very excited about going to college. She wants to major in international law, diplomacy, or something in that area. As for being a second semester senior, Emily is finally finding room to enjoy her classes. She feels a little slack now only because she worked so tirelessly during her first semester of senior year and throughout her junior year.

Luke applied to Virginia Tech and NC State. He has been accepted to State and was chosen as a semi-finalist for

the Park Scholarship. He feels sure about going to State and wants to major in biomedical engineering. Luke got started early, so he was not too stressed out. As a second semester senior, he feels less pressured, and like Ashlie and Emily, he is enjoying his classes more. He is being a little more slack but is getting about the same amount of sleep and free time as last semester. When asked if he would like to tell the students of NCSSM anything else about college, Luke replied "Relax! It isn't that big of a deal and you do better when you just relax." Sounds like good advice!

Opinion: Bush's No Child Left Behind

Inhibits Improvement and Discourages Educators



www.whitehouse.gov

President Bush announces his "No Child Left Behind" plan.

REBECCA BUCKWALTER

In May 2002, an elementary school principal in Simonton, Georgia committed suicide after receiving the standardized test results condemning her school to funding cuts and possible closure. Under President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" program, educators are held accountable for student performance regardless of outside

factors shown to influence testing. In eighteen states, severe and often counterproductive consequences follow failing test scores.

When a school fails standardized testing, the response should be to bring that school up to par with increased funding and attention; instead, our government is now attempting to punish schools into better test scores and diverts funding

to high-scoring schools. Bad schools become worse, and teachers suffer for teaching sub-average students. Teachers are by no means the first group to blame for low student scores; our legislators' decisions concerning funding - for teachers, schools, and students - are the origin of the problem. Cutting funds in response to bad scores only aggravates the situation.

The "No Child Left Behind" program involves increased attention to the quality of teachers; however, the directive creates a self-promoting cycle. The program itself is one of the factors contributing to a drop in the level of educator proficiency by making education an inhospitable profession. The funding we direct toward teacher salaries and our school systems determines a lot about the appeal - or repulsion - of teaching and the quality of the people who become teachers.

Teaching is no glamorous profession, and as our society moves toward gender equality, we lose the almost guaranteed

quota for teachers afforded us by the stereotypical set of available professions for women: teaching, secretarial work, and nursing. We are beginning to rely more heavily upon individuals who come to teaching by choice, but our government renews acts in counter-productive ways, rewarding members of the teaching profession with low salaries, long hours, and poor benefits.

Though it seems this might result in a work force of empathetic teachers, in reality this treatment of educators invites lower standards for teachers - leading to the inclusion of the unqualified, the less committed, and those who come to teaching for the wrong reasons - while current conditions drive off true educators who cannot tolerate or afford such exploitation. In a typical public school environment, some of the best teachers often leave to return to school - choosing to pursue high salary degrees in law, medicine, or business - or to become part of another profes-

sion. As teacher workloads increase and classrooms fill to the brim, teacher salaries show bare minimum rises and standardized testing holds teachers responsible for factors beyond control, such as family income or immigrant status, reduces school funding and doles out - or withholds - bonuses based upon student performance.

Students score, on average, thirty points higher on the SAT for every \$10,000 dollars their parents earn. The new pay-for-performance approach to educational funding has served to punish both students and teachers in low-income areas, working not to counter, but rather to amplify the disparity in scores between low-income and high-income districts. Among students, minorities and immigrants suffer under the new funding programs. Low-income areas are often areas with a large minority population, explaining in part the low minority test scores. Instead of addressing the problem by targeting these

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