

Editorial

There is a need for a non-military ROTC

Father Theodore Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame, has a good idea that has yet to receive the publicity it deserves. He has called for the implementation of a non-military counterpart to the Regional Officer Training Corps on college campuses throughout the country.

An undeniable concern for peace dating some 35 years and his perception that America's college students have become complacent about international affairs compelled Hesburgh to advocate a "parallel choice" for our nation's students.

His plan would not replace the military's ROTC program, but rather serve as an alternative path for those students who "want to be all that they can be" without having to join the armed forces.

Hesburgh's conception would incorporate some of the same aspects as the ROTC. The program, if ever adopted, would provide full four-year scholarships in return for a student's pledge to serve four years in the Peace Corps. Graduates would also be required to serve as regional or local leaders in the Peace Corps or in some other American aid organization.

Entrance requirements would remain just as stiff, and undergraduates would study the language, culture, social and political condition of the places they wished to serve.

Rather than serve time on ships, airforce bases or military training camps, the peace program's graduates would spend their summer months working with the urban and rural poor at home and abroad. After graduation, overseas returnees would receive the same free graduate studies benefits as those returning from military service.

Hesburgh believes the cost of the program could be incorporated into the Peace Corps budget and the remainder into the federal student aid program. Yet implementation of his plan faces a long, uphill battle. The continual cuts in student aid and inconsistent federal funding of the Peace Corps stand in the way of making Hesburgh's dream become reality.

Peace Corps officials concur. Deedie Runkel, a Peace Corps public affairs officer based in Washington, D.C., said that the idea would take a great deal of work with Congress because of the sheer size of the program and the years it would take to iron out all the details. For this very reason, the Peace Corps is hesitant to push the plan through Congress at present, although it wholeheartedly embraces the concept.

The idea of a "peaceful ROTC" has too much merit to be ignored. Not only would such a program offer American college students a viable, peaceful alternative for global and self discovery, it would send a positive message worldwide that the United States is sincere about its commitment to international understanding and the betterment of the human condition — admittedly, a lofty ambition.

Moreover, the Peace Corp leadership plan would be the first of its kind, perhaps setting a universal precedent for similar programs in other post-industrial nations. In order for this to occur, however, the United States would have to place world peace on a higher federal priority than it is currently doing, which sadly is a doubtful prospect at best.



"Read the suspect his rights over and over again... till he confesses."

Letters

Justice

Silas Bissell is not a terrorist but a peaceful, caring person. It would be ludicrous, if it were not so tragic, that he should be charged as a criminal by the same government that has built enough bombs to kill every living thing on earth many times over, and has already killed so many people in such terrible ways.

I know first-hand about the Weather Underground as my own son was a member of that group. During his growing-up years he was a gentle, responsible, caring young person, with high moral standards and a belief in non-violence.

He is that kind of person today. During the 60s he became involved in anti-war activities because of his mounting sorrow, then despair over the violence we were committing in Southeast Asia.

For many years the Students for a Democratic Society (from which the Weather Underground evolved) conducted non-violent protests against the Vietnam war. When their peaceful protests met only with the escalation of the war, their frustration finally culminated in actions that were intended to destroy property, not lives.

My son remained underground for 11 years, and when he surfaced to face the charges against him, he was sentenced to 18 months of community service, a fine and three years probation by a wise federal judge in New Jersey.

Like Bissell, my son is a peaceful, productive member of his community. A prison sentence would benefit no one, least of all the taxpayer. Silas Bissell has already achieved his own rehabilitation and contributed his own community service.

Mildred O'Donnell
Springfield

Hang-up

In response to Blake Sliter's letter (ODE, Jan. 28) — give it a rest!

I've been reading your gross generalizations about a group of students for the past year. It's obvious that you have a real strange hang-up when it comes to the Greek system. What is this fascination all about?

If you despise them so much, why don't you just ignore them? Do they really have a significant impact on your life?

In four years at this school as a non-Greek, I have met a lot of good people in the Greek system. In the same time I have met some that I don't care for.

So what! There is good and bad in any group. Generalizing is too easy. We are supposed to be getting educated here. Blake buddy! Why don't you put a little more thought into things you write? Save letters to the Emerald for more significant social issues.

The Greek system does not need you as a critic or a consumer advocate. I suggest that you spend more time trying to do some good and less time writing overly critical letters about a group of people that you have a personal vendetta against.

Have you considered getting professional help to deal with

your severe paranoia? Maybe you should look into it.

Jay Dyer
Rhetoric and communication

Closer look

Concerning Mr. Sliter's continued deluge of rhetorical anti-Greek excreta (ODE, Jan. 28): As a former Greek, I concur that the system has inherent problems (apathy, stereotypical images of preoccupation with physical gratifications). However, his character assassination of Lambda Chi Alpha goes beyond the pale.

While it is true that sexual liaison is more easily facilitated if initiated (pardon the pun) at a fraternity function or, Sliter's favorite, a SWIMMING POOL, it is just as true that the same thing goes on (goes down?) at any bar, apartment, co-op, dorm or party with more than two members of the opposite sex. It's really just a matter of where you'd like to pick someone up, as any cerebral dwarf could discern.

Those associated with Lambda Chi Alpha are each deserved of being seen as individuals — as are any of us. Yet Sliter, from atop his holy mountain, lightning playing about his greying countenance, looks down and finds them wanting.

To those who would emulate Sliter's spewing of paranoid ejaculate, I urge a closer look and an open mind.

To Sliter, I would remind you, sir, that it's a certain kind of fool who likes to hear the sound of his own name.

Gordon Spencer Myers
Student

Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor must be limited to 250 words, typed, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style. Letters to the editor should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300, EMU.

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