

Make Dead Week a truly dead week

When is Dead Week? The University says it is this week. But for most students, it's this coming weekend.

The purpose of a dead week is to give students a chance to prepare for final exams without the stress of quizzes, exams and project deadlines.

At the University, Dead Week is no different than any other week, with some minor exceptions: Instructors cannot assign work during Dead Week that is not already on the syllabus, and no examination worth more than 20 percent of the final grade may be given. Big deal.

ASUO President Bobby Lee intends to ask the Student Senate to submit a resolution in January to change the makeup of Dead Week. The proposal would ask that classes be made optional during Dead Week, and no work or exams would be due.

An ideal situation would be for classes to have only review sessions during Dead Week. Attempting to teach new material right up until Finals Week fails on two grounds: Students lack time to absorb the new material, and they are so busy trying to absorb it, they forget the old material. In short, it's a lose-lose situation.

If instructors believe final exams are so important, they should give students the opportunity to prepare for them in a serious manner.

There is another solution — devalue final exams. Finals typically account for a significant percentage — sometimes 50 percent or more — of a student's final grade.

If final exams accounted for a lesser percentage, the need for a dead week would virtually disappear.

This should not be taken as another complaint about students being overworked. Rather, it is a call for providing an atmosphere conducive to education. As it currently stands, Dead Week is closer to "hell week" for most students, and many are too brain-dead to even think about finals.

Instructors could easily make all final projects, papers, etc. due the week before Dead Week. There is nothing magical about Dead Week assignments that would be lost if they were due a week earlier.

If instructors believe final exams are so important, they should give students the opportunity to prepare for them in a serious manner.

Each instructor should also remember that he or she is not the only one giving a final. Students have several exams to prepare for. Under the current system, students have about one to two days to study for an exam — not a lot of time to prepare for a test that essentially determines students' final grades.

The Student Senate and the University Senate should seriously consider the Dead Week proposal. It's in the best interests of students, instructors and the University. Think about it.



'I'M GETTING CRAMPS!'

LETTERS

Study abroad

I'm writing to let you know what a great experience a foreign study program can be. I'm spending my junior year in Quito, Ecuador with the OSSHE program — and having a blast. I can't begin to tell you how much I'm learning — in more than just Spanish.

Through studying at the university, volunteering for underprivileged children and living with my Ecuadorian family, I have a new perspective on life. I've seen that lifestyles of people around the world can be very different, especially from the view of a less-developed country, and I have gained a greater appreciation for my home.

Ecuador is beautiful and has lots of geographic diversity. I've been able to visit the jungle, the coast, the mountains, and I plan to see the Galapagos Islands as well. During my two-month break between semesters, I will be able to visit many countries in South America, including Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Uruguay.

Immersing myself in a new culture has been a challenge, but it is the best way to learn a foreign language. My ability to communicate in Spanish has improved immensely. One aspect of my classes I really enjoy is being able to talk to students from Japan, Germany and other countries in our common language — Spanish. I have built friendships I hope will last a long time.

I would encourage anyone who is remotely interested to pursue a study abroad program. I can guarantee your life will never be the same.

Kristin Hansen
International Studies

Live and learn

In regard to Kelli Congelli's letter about her registration mishap (ODE, Dec. 4), poor me. Wah. Wah.

Paul Brown
Neil Boyce
Health Education

Imagine that

The only thing greater than Jim Blanchard's attitude (ODE, Dec. 4) is his imagination.

Scott Naucler
Physics

Grandstanding

I would like to respond to the letter from Stas Stavrianeas (ODE, Dec. 3) regarding the lecture given by Professor Ronald Wixman on Nov. 16. This was an extremely informative and well-balanced discussion of the Serbian invasion of Bosnia-Herzegovina. For those who were not there, let me make it clear this was a lecture, not a debate or public hearing.

Prior to the lecture, Greek nationalists distributed a propaganda leaflet. Although Wixman permitted this, he disclaimed any connection to the leaflet before beginning his talk.

Wixman categorically stated he was restricting his talk only to Bosnia-Herzegovina, and that he would not discuss Slovenia, Macedonia or even the Serbian/Croatian issue.

Stavrianeas said Wixman "deliberately misled his audience on this particular subject," referring to the actions and positions of Greece regarding Macedonia. This is absurd. Wixman never discussed any position on that subject.

Clearly these Greek nationalists wanted to present their demands by using Wixman's lecture as a "captive audience." I, and many others in the audience, resent such grandstanding. Furthermore, I resent their new tactic of using this bogus attack on Wixman to gain attention.

Isn't it interesting that if Stavrianeas is so concerned about presenting his views on Greece, instead of writing a letter to the editor discussing those issues, he used this forum to attack Professor Wixman. I would challenge him to present his views for others to critique. Maybe he knows his views will not stand up to public scrutiny.

Melissa Holtz
Biochemistry

'Garfield'?

I consider myself a loyal and faithful *Emerald* reader. Every trip to the library starts off with a rather detailed but sometimes unnecessary browsing of the *Emerald*.

I know I am not alone in the feeling that the comics in the classified section are very entertaining to read. "Garfield" and "The Far Side" are great,

but I respect and enjoy the cartoons written by University stu-

dents and alumni the best.

One thing is troubling me, though. What happened to "Weasel's World"? I recently purchased the "Weasel's World" book at the bookstore. Many of my friends agree that Weasel is truly inspired. So I appeal to the *Emerald* — bring back the Weasel.

Keith Moring
Chemistry

Forum

The Asian/black forum may or may not have been open to all people, but *Emerald* reporter Tammy Batey wasn't open to cross-cultural understanding. She had half her story written before she came. The attempt of a vote to determine whether she should be there was not meant to exclude whites, but the frequent white perspective of domination and ignorance, which she brought anyway.

A close Asian friend of mine had invited me to attend the forum. I declined because I was aware the forum was meant to encourage positive communications between African-Americans and Asian-Americans. It had little to do with Native American, Chicano and, least of all, white perspectives.

Groups of color rarely have the opportunity to address issues between one another because they are so preoccupied with constant white racism.

From what I heard, I think Batey misinterpreted what was said. She took offense at the general feeling of media mistrust.

Also, it may be hard for her to distinguish between what people were asking her to write and what the internalized expectation for her as a white person told her to do. But what she produced limited her own and many of her readers' understanding.

Batey doesn't understand why a Chinese-American felt uncomfortable expressing herself freely at the forum, or as a reporter, her purpose in being there. Nor does she understand the definition of respect. If the white media is going to send "a member," they should send someone who does know, so there won't be personal conflicts.

Sven Orozco
Undeclared

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