

# Letters

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noses! It's high time we find alternative funding for our University programs rather than depend on corporate handouts.

**Sabrina McNamara**  
English literature

## Minority rules

The withdrawal of Nike CEO Phil Knight's donations was the result of the actions of a small number of students who supposedly advocate the rights of workers worldwide. They would say that the decision belongs to the students who voted for the Worker Rights Consortium. But we know very well that with the very low participation in the student elections any organized group of people can pass whatever they want. It is shameful that a minority of students controls the student government. It is more shameful that their opinions and doings are taken to represent the will of the student body. Many of them protest against what they call unchecked corporate power, but they never wonder if there is any real check in the power they exercise.

**Napoleon Linardatos**  
economics

## Christianity "hype"

I was thoroughly disgusted to witness the hyped Christian presentation on Tuesday. It was an insidious attempt to recruit Christians through testimony, whereby a seemingly normal individual recalls his "really, really, really" bad times, his discovery of religion and his subsequent attribution of stabilization to some abstract god working through people. (It could never be asserted that it was any one of the multitudes of other variables or explanations that contributed to his/her stabilization, the least of which could be the people themselves!)

I did not find it an amicable dialogue and expression of faith, but rather the lauding of Christian values (which are, indeed, only one set of values, not the "true" or "most good" values), and the imposition of one way of understanding the world — through religion — as the only explanation of our existence.

If someone needs to replace their ability to reason, think and understand the world around them with an easily quotable, but illogical and unsubstantiated religion (with a long history of oppression, domination and hatred), please let them choose one that is not universalizing. And if they must, please do not give them an open forum to corrupt, manipulate and prey on our minds, souls or bodies.

**Charles G. Haller II**  
international studies/journalism

## What is Nike hiding?

The two letters in the April 21 issue of the Emerald raised a number of questions for me. First, what is the source of Kimberly Thale's "research" on Nike's working conditions? Was it an independent and unbiased source? Was it a company publication? Was it a Fair Labor Association publication? Was it from any source that could lose money by reporting otherwise? Regardless of the source's credibility, does the statement that Nike's working conditions are "exceptional in comparison to other factories" really say anything positive? Isn't living in less poverty than others still living in poverty? Isn't being less exploited than others still exploitation?

In response to Nick Larsen's letter, is a new football stadium really more important than the basic human rights of people around the globe? Should a sport, or money for that matter, really be such a priority that we turn a blind eye to the pain and misery of others, which we are all partially responsible for? Is it right for predominantly white, middle- to upper-middle class American college students to whine about increased incidental fees or lack of a football stadium when the truth is that we are actually very privileged and lucky to be where we are and who we are?

More pointedly, if Nike treats its employees overseas so well, why would Nike CEO Phil Knight feel so threatened that he would pull funding? Why should the University have to inform Knight "of the school's... involvement" in the Worker Rights Consortium issue, as Thale thinks?

**Elizabeth Joy Howard**  
University graduate '99

## Alumni should have a say

Continue to quote student government types and activists involved in this Worker Rights Consortium fiasco as they blather on about how much they care about the University and the "University community." Such dissembling is always good for a rueful chuckle. Maybe these folks can organize a bake sale to recoup the millions of dollars that have been apparently tossed away by alienating Nike CEO Phil Knight.

Not one of the activists had the vision to see beyond their own agendas or bothered to ascertain what any of the alumni think of their committing the University to a controversial course of action such as joining the WRC. Despite what many students apparently think, alumni are not outsiders, we are stakeholders in the further well-being of the University and full members of its community. Our opinions and concerns in the direction of the University should be sought out with at least as much vigor as our fiscal contributions are.

It should not be news to anyone at the University that there are a lot more alumni than there are current students. When the student body and the president commit the University to a course of action such as joining the WRC and kicking our largest patron in the teeth, even if somewhat tentatively so, all us alumni are vicariously along for the ride wherever it leads. All alumni deserve more consideration in the final decisions of the University than has thus far been shown. Apparently, we only have a voice through our checkbooks.

**Eric D. Jensen**  
JD '99

## University self-interested

I agree with Phil. Perhaps an era of pure academic self-interest is the right new path for this school. Give yourself to higher professors' salaries, proper school promotion, etc.

**Joel Egan**  
architecture

## Will we drop the WRC?

For years we've been told (by those claiming to know) that donations by the likes of Nike CEO Phil Knight involve no strings, expressed or otherwise; no "quid pro quo." Now that Nike's CEO is weaseling out of promised donations in the wake of the University's decision to quit sucking up to corporations that use overseas sweatshop labor, it will be interesting to see how long and how

strongly the University holds to its own pledge. My guess: The administration will drop out of the Worker Rights Consortium after the year-long "trial period" is up. I would like to be proven wrong... but more than 20 years of observing University politics does not make me sanguine.

**Bill Smee**  
staff, anthropology

## Value others' beliefs

On a campus where it seems people can rarely speak their mind and express themselves without a student group denouncing those views, I would like to set the rare example of showing some support, respect and tolerance for "Ryan."

Do I agree with Ryan? Personally, I am a devout atheist. I would like to applaud, however, the subtle yet clever "Do you agree with Ryan?" campaign.

Why do I have so much respect for what Campus Crusade for Christ is doing? Simply because for once I am not force-fed a pile of scriptures or forced to walk to class, eying a shameful display of mutilated fetuses, which does nothing but leave me with contempt for all faiths that follow Jesus.

With this said, we need to examine this refreshing blitz of red T-shirts and ask ourselves, "Are we truly as tolerant as we claim to be?" When I see "Ryan equals death" mockingly etched on the sidewalk, I am convinced again that many still have a long way to go in learning to respect others' beliefs.

This week you may not be converted by the grace of God to Christianity. I sure won't. But if you don't necessarily agree with Ryan and aren't examining your relationship with Jesus, at least show some respect to those who are willing to speak out. Maybe we can all learn a lesson this week and examine what it is we value. I value respect, conviction, values and tolerance. Do you agree with me?

**Bennett Lacy**  
pre-journalism

## Ecoplege.com wastes paper

As I was walking around campus the other day, I noticed about 100 little paper signs posted everywhere that read "Ecoplege.com." It was easy to see that so many signs were not necessary. For instance, the covered bench on 13th Avenue and Kincaid had about 20 signs stapled around it, each adjacent to another. And then there were the multitude of little signs stuck in the grass along the sidewalk.

What a waste of paper.

It is ironic that an "environmental" organization is responsible for this waste.

The way I see it, two of the most important ecological issues are excessive fossil fuel use and deforestation. We all know that wasting paper contributes to deforestation, which contributes to increased carbon dioxide levels. And science has accepted (finally) that increased carbon dioxide levels contribute to global warming. I find it comical if not offensive that Ecoplege contributes to problems it claims to be acting against.

According to Ecoplege's Web site, students should boycott the environmentally irresponsible companies that they have listed by not working for them. Perhaps they should add themselves to the list.

**Aaron Fabbri**  
computer and information science

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