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■ In my opinion

## Moderating the bench

We are facing a Bull's Run, the Moderate's Last Stand. Our nation is on a hideous precipice about to be tipped over into a wasteland of partisanship and hate. Democracy was always supposed to be about discussion. Democracy was always supposed to be about compromise. Unfortunately, it seems the more vocal among us are also the most ridiculous; the people on both sides of the spectrum who view the world in terms of black and white and refuse to acknowledge sepia. Even Pat Robertson is railing against Bill Frist for not being right-wing enough.

I must admit, John McCain has always been one of my favorite politicians. Growing up in a post-Watergate world, to me he seemed almost trustworthy. Though I'm not sure the higher gavel should go to any of the three judges who appear to be on their way to the bench because of the settlement McCain helped author, I applaud the courage of men and women who brave their party heads in order to do what they feel is in the national interest.

In this case, I think the recent judicial bargain was correct. The filibuster was about to be abolished, which would have caused more damage to our democracy than the compromise of the Infamous Fourteen. The Democrats would have martyred themselves to no avail, and there's no way the game of chicken (slowing down the federal government) would have turned the liberals into good guys in the eyes of the public. Not that it shouldn't have — conservatives were wrong in their accusations about the Democrats being against religious judges. When looking at the nominees, newspapers from The Washington Post to The New York Times base their opinions on business ties and previous legal decisions. William Pryor,



JENNIFER MCBRIDE  
QUASHING DISSENT

for example, is so far right that even the more conservative Supreme Court justices have written opinions striking down his rulings. He was the advocate for Texas' absurd sodomy laws in Lawrence v. Texas, and his ties to corporations (big tobacco, among others) make me very uneasy.

Our judges are already being accused of playing politics. In some states, judges need to raise huge campaign coffers in order to be elected — in West Virginia alone, the last judicial election's candidates spent more than \$5 million. The Supreme Court's decision in Bush v. Gore split down partisan lines. In times like these, we need to do everything necessary to protect the purity of the legal system. The U.S. Constitution must preserve justice for all, not justice for the rich, the white and the heterosexual. The best way to be fair is to make sure our bench is full of moderates who don't owe any party favors.

For this reason, rather than give the most bone-flaying of partisans lifetime federal appointments, I urge cooperation. If the president and the Senate can't be trusted to keep the judiciary impartial, I suggest that one more safeguard be added. I don't think it's an unreasonable suggestion that the people who make most of our laws, who are the custodians of truth and justice for a lifetime, are asked to be confirmed by a supermajority. A candidate who

receives 51 percent of the vote is probably not the right robe for the job. I would advocate that the U.S. Constitution or Senate rules be altered so that 60 votes are required before any nominee assumes the bench. This would assure a bipartisanship that is more than superficial and craft a law less likely to swing to extremes.

Neither party is likely willing to give up the power to almost single-handedly appoint someone of its own politic viewpoint, but what's best for the country will probably be somewhere in between. This real "constitutional option" would decrease the incentive for filibusters and death-in-committee and would encourage true consultation between the president and the Senate.

The next few elections are going to be important for the level of discourse in this country. I am afraid of the potential of red and blue to stop talking to each other, of border wars breaking out between California and Nevada. We have much more in common than we have in difference, as witnessed by the voice of Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah, who is willing to go against the president in order to support stem cell research. For this reason, Liberals and Conservatives alike should applaud the courage of the moderates. Instead, the bloggers' attacks on George Voinovich for criticizing Bolton are acerbic. One blog tells us that "it's a good thing for Voinovich that the Senate is in recess; ... that'll give him time to go see his therapist and get back on his Zoloft."

Can't we all agree that people who are willing to reach a hand out to the other side in friendship are the most courageous of politicians? I, for one, admire a man willing to cry for his country.

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■ Editorial

## Diversity plan bogged down by its own idealism

In May, the University introduced a Five-Year Diversity Plan designed to ensure that our campus community is one that supports freedom, safety and equal opportunity for all.

Some ideas are well thought out and feasible, and for that Chair Greg Vincent and the plan's other creators should be lauded. Encouraging racial or gender minorities in job announcements is an easy way to reach out and bring diversity to campus. Making sure that a course in gender/sexuality is required for graduation is also an excellent, tangible plan. Mentioning at one point that tokenism is not the aim of the plan and that the University system itself needs to change is a priceless piece of wisdom.

However, the fact remains that much of the diversity plan is just too idealistic. Ensuring that the University works with local schools to get minority students, their parents and their families excited about college is a lot to swallow, especially considering the lack of concrete planning or funding. Hiring clusters of faculty in different areas of diversity for 30-40 staff positions in fewer than 10 years will surely prove difficult considering the University's less-than-desirable faculty wage. Even the simple idea of more community conversations on issues of diversity needs to have a solid plan behind it. When it comes to the tangible issues of offering more scholarship money, the question is practically implicit: Will funds be redirected toward these and other programs? Where will that money come from? We just don't know.

Goals such as seriously recruiting underrepresented faculty, increasing Diversity Building Scholarships and setting up new departments and staff positions cannot be sufficiently accomplished given the current situation of funding within the University. The plan even mentions that putting money toward diversity is key to showing the University's value on diversity, and yet this five-year set of goals outlines no way to ensure that funding can be created or redirected toward the program. The plan claims to be a vision for the best educational environment possible; with a host of new ideas and less University money than ever, it seems clear that accomplishing all facets of this plan is anything but possible. Idealism is only worth so much when it comes down to reality.

As always, the issues of a University are fundamentally connected. It is hardly just the fault of the new diversity plan; it is a fault, as well as an important issue, of the entire University. The problem of lagging diversity simply cannot be solved without first solving the problem of an underfunded school in general. Lower-than-average faculty salaries won't bring in new and diverse faculty, and new, diverse graduate students surely don't want to attend a school that can't later offer them exciting job opportunities.

The Five-Year Diversity Plan is a fabulous step in the right direction. In the future, however, the best thing for this University will be more funding or at least feasible proposals to increase diversity when the best thing falls through.

**CORRECTION**

The summary to Tuesday's story "Malone rewrites Duck javelin record" states, "Sarah Malone landed a throw at 186-10, three inches farther than her previous school record." This is incorrect. Her throw on Saturday was 7 feet, 3 inches farther than her previous personal best of 179-7.

The Emerald regrets the error.

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