

Student grades, absences could affect field trip privileges

EMMALIE COX

Staff Reporter

Rumors that the school was going to enforce a new field trip policy have been heard within the crowds of students during the past few weeks. The most common rumors were that the school was going to limit field trips to students with higher grade averages or cut out field trips altogether, but those rumors are anything but the truth.

The new "field trip policy" really isn't a policy at all. It was just a few ideas being discussed in Faculty Senate meetings. The idea for a change came up when faculty started noticing how many absences were on record.

"At one point we had a teacher come to us with 190 student absences and it was only the first two or three months of school," Rob Holstrom, activities director, said. Another teacher calculated that students miss an average of 10 days of school each year not including athletic events and field trips. It doesn't make sense for students to not show up for class, yet have the privilege of going on field trips.

The Faculty Senate also took into consideration how field trips disrupt other teachers' schedules. For example, when the photo classes took their big field trip downtown, it pulled many students out of some of their classes, affecting instructions and requiring makeup work for the students. Often, if only half

of the class is present the teachers don't give as much homework.

But it wasn't just the field trip and activities disrupting everyday schedules that was being looked at. The faculty found that it wasn't in some of the students best interest to get out of school for field trips and activities. "[If we went in this direction] we would need to look at the students absences, look at what classes they are failing, and their 'Student in Good Standing' [status] would be incorporated," Holstrom said. Student in

Good Standing is a system implemented to help students to keep track of graduation requirements.

Student in Good Standing is a system that was first implemented with last years' freshmen and has since included sophomores. A student is considered not in good standing if they are failing one or more core classes, and will work with their counselor to raise grades. Those not considered in good standing don't get to participate in extra curricular activities until grades are raised. In this case, students

would have to miss field trips because they are failing a class/classes. "We are trying to do what is in the best interest of the students," Holstrom said.

I can understand restricting field trips based on unexcused absences, but limits because of grades shouldn't matter. If a student is failing almost all of their classes it becomes an issue, but one or two shouldn't matter. Sometimes students just need a little boost to raise their grades. Taking away the privilege of field trips wouldn't be a fair

punishment. No matter what grades we have or what our standing is, field trips are still experiences that play a big role in our understanding and education.

Since the beginning of school, Holstrom has been keeping a calendar in the mail room that has a color coded list of all the field trips taken and yet to come. Having taken a look at this myself, it is quite a rainbow of colors. The point of the calendar was to map out all the field trips to display to all of the faculty to show just how much time is spent away from school.

However, a policy like this would be very hard to implement. After having many meetings between the Faculty Senate and the Curriculum Coordinating Council (CCC), any plan of action having to do with field trips would take away from the curriculum and part of life's experiences for those students. Most of these field trips inspire and advance the students and affect their learning.

There are many ideas for changing policies within the curriculum at this point that are being explored. The Faculty Senate and CCC plan to continue exploring the possibilities throughout the next semester and are nowhere close to coming to a final resolution. "This isn't just a make-cut-and-dry decision. We are always looking at how we can improve and how it will affect the students," Holstrom said.

Pressure of Valentine's Day daunting

JAIMIE LORENZINI

Staff Reporter

For many people, attempting to find true love on Valentine's Day is a yearly ritual. Unfortunately, many of these people end up spending the day unaccompanied and heartbroken. Unable to cope, they give in to the loneliness they are feeling.

According to The Samaritans organization, one in ten people under the age of 25 feels depressed, or unwanted on Valentine's Day. Trying to cope with being alone, people are apt to do illogical and sometimes desperate things. The U.S. Census Bureau's Public Information Office made it clear that 15% of American women send themselves flowers on Valentine's Day.

It's not unheard of for people to radically

change their physical appearance, eating habits, and mental state on or around Valentine's Day. Frequently people will find something they don't like about themselves, weight or hair color, and blame it for the loneliness they are feeling. The Samaritans organization also reported that over two-fifths of single people feel negative or indifferent towards Valentine's Day.

"The stereotype is that you should have someone to cuddle with. A lot of men buy flowers just to get a girl happy with joy," Sebastian Okhovat, sophomore, said.

The pressure of finding love (or in this case not finding it) is perhaps a daunting task. For someone to raise their hopes of eternal love only to be rejected is nerve-racking to say the least.

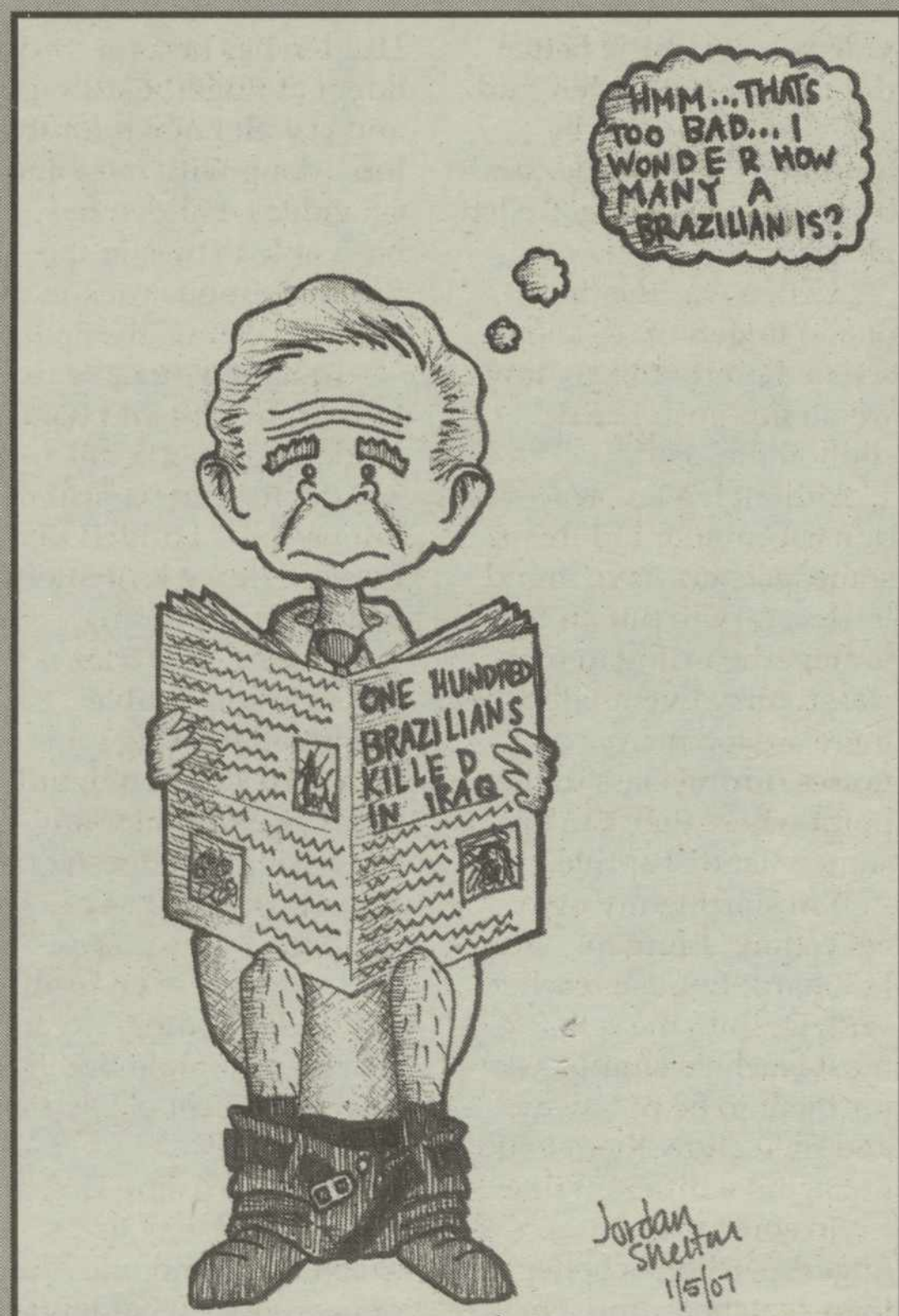
In fact, it can leave a person with negative long term emotional effects.

"The truth is, there's a lot of pressure to find a date on Valentine's Day," Christina Letsou, freshman, said.

It's time to expand Valentines Day. It's time to not only honor romantic love, but to honor friends and the people that work around us daily. The typical Valentine's Day lovey dovey feelings falter in comparison to the sense of gratitude you could give to someone.

After saying "I love you" to someone, take a moment to say "thank you" to your parents, friends, or anyone else who has effected your daily life. Spend the day recognizing the little things that people do for you, such as the time your teacher takes to prepare you for your future.

Student Perspective: A day in the life of President Bush



Cartoon by Jordan Shelton



Cartoon by Jon Helmkamp