



Editor's NOTE:

In this issue . . .
An open invitation to join our editorial staff

BY DARCY WYTKO | Editor-in-Chief

Imagine for a moment that you're a professor or faculty member at Central. You have a classroom of roughly 40 students who you meet with for an hour on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Every week you assign them each a paper on a different topic.

Then you take all of their homework, grade it and make changes to it as best you can over the course of two days, spread it out over 20 pages, publish 6,000 copies, and distribute them around campus and the community - with your name on it.

Keep in mind that you still have other classes to teach, a second job, a boyfriend or girlfriend, your family to think about and maybe even children of your own. You also have advertisers paying you to publish their ads right alongside your students' homework.

And about that homework - some students turn their assignments in right on time, and their work is phenomenal. Others turn their work in moments before deadline, and it's sub-par at best. Either way, you have a public and financial obligation to produce a publication every week.

People love it, people hate it and people hold you accountable for every mistake made by you or your students - and sometimes for the mistakes of past students that you've never met - even though you would never mean to publish anything inaccurate. But you're committed to your job, you love what you do, you love your students and so you take the heat gladly, week after week.

When the final product is poor, it's devastating. But when its good, it feels like victory.

That is the world of an editor on the Observer staff. For those brave, intrepid souls interested in becoming an editor, we're currently accepting applications for spring quarter until March 4.

For more on how to apply for an editorial position, e-mail us at:
cwuobserver@gmail.com

Observance

Carrying concealed weapons on campus:
How does rendering us defenseless
help protect us from shooters?

BY JEREMY VIMISLIK | Copy Desk

Tuesday, I turned 21. My first order of business? Applying for my Concealed Pistol License (CPL) and buying a box of ammo. Why? Because, as an American, I have the right to legally defend myself against some nefarious individual who I will likely never encounter, but against whom I will possibly need to defend my life or the life of my loved ones. I do not want to be unprepared. Call me paranoid - I would say I'm enlightened.

On Feb. 12, professor Amy Bishop was charged with shooting six coworkers and killing three during a faculty meeting at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. According to CNN, her husband was 'baffled' by where she may have gotten a gun - the Bishops do not own any firearms.

I could go on and on about troubled ex-marine Charles Whitman, the first college campus shooter, who after killing his mother, ascended the University of Texas clock tower with a locker full of hunting rifles in 1966. He was stopped after law enforcement asked students to shoot back with their own hunting rifles.

People forgot Columbine until the Virginia Tech shooting in 2007, where Seung-Hui Cho managed to reload ten times while killing 32 and wounding 21. He obtained his two pistols legally. Columbine's shooters obtained their guns illegally from older friends. Columbine was a high school, and no student there would legally be able to carry guns due to their age. On college campuses, most of us are old enough, yet we can't carry concealed weapons. Shooters come prepared, while we're defenseless.

Last month, CWU Chief of Police Steve Ritterreiser held a training session focused on surviving a campus shooting situation. If anyone

thinks campus security can detect and restrain a prepared shooter - let's face it, they come prepared - we are all out of our minds.

Virginia Tech's police department has 49 full-time officers and a K-9 unit, and still 32 people died. We have 13 officers. During a crisis, police forces from the surrounding area are brought in, but what could we really expect in a shooting situation?

To obtain a CPL in Washington, all one needs is a record free of felonies or violent misdemeanors. It takes about a week to get a federal background check and your fingerprints logged into a statewide database. After that, a CPL affords the holder to conceal-carry a firearm in many public places, with several exceptions, including school property. Shooters see campuses as easy. No one but the police will (or can) shoot back.

I support concealed carry on campus. I understand that campuses are a hotbed for drug use, drinking, and rowdy behavior, so I think new requirements should be added to CPL laws. Many other states require firearms training and psyche evaluations. That makes sense. It also concerns me that police might confuse regular gun carrying students with an actual shooter; they wouldn't know who to take down.

Still, why make it illegal to carry on campus, yet legal almost everywhere else? As the voice of our future, we need to go out and educate ourselves on this issue and voice our opinions and ideas to legislators. If you are not familiar with firearms, I urge you to visit a range or shop, and learn about their safe, legal usage. Why not read up on the facts of gun ownership versus crime rates and murders? I have, and I've made my decision.

**"Shooters see campuses as easy.
No one but the police will (or can)
shoot back."**

The editorial views expressed here are those of the writers and not necessarily the views of the newspaper staff at large, the student body, or the faculty and administration. They are not to be considered the official views of CWU.

Dear Editor,

In its Jan. 28 - Feb. 3 issue, the Observer mentioned that Central eliminated the Bachelor of Science in Sociology major in response to the state's budget crisis. Since then, the department has received numerous inquiries. Some students thought all sociology degree programs at Central were eliminated. Others worried about the future of the department. I want to take this opportunity to assure everyone that all other programs in sociology remain intact and the Department of Sociology is as strong as ever.

Sociology has been a popular major at Central. In the past several years we have seen a continued growth of our majors, with on average about 200 majors per year.

Many students consider sociology as a good, solid liberal arts major that provides a strong foundation for careers in human/social services, research, education, business, and a variety of other professions. The Department of Sociology offers several programs with a high degree of flexibility meeting student individual educational and career goals.

After eliminating the small B.S. in Sociology major, we are now able to concentrate our resources on the larger and stronger degree programs - B.A. in Sociology (both the 45 credit major and the 60 credit major), B.S. in Social Services, and the Sociology Honors program.

With the support of the Office of Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies, the Sociology Department began to also offer the B.S. in Social Services program at CWU - Pierce County in Fall 2009.

We are undergoing transition and change. Curriculum revision and additions of new faculty have strengthened our programs. We are excited about the change and will continue to transform an already good department to a truly outstanding one.

Hong Xiao
Professor and Chair
Department of Sociology

After attending GALA/EQuAL's Freedom to Marry ceremony on 2/11, I feel compelled to voice my concerns about the so-called advocacy I saw.

What I witnessed was a disorganized mockery of marriage during what should have been a serious event. Perhaps they don't understand the seriousness of these issues. Perhaps they're spoiled living in Washington — the only state in the country to affirm same-sex partnerships by vote — and have forgotten about the millions of lesbian and gay couples who live in states where their relationships are not recognized or prohibited from being recognized. Perhaps they've forgotten how perilously close they came to losing the rights they're privileged to have when those rights were put up to a vote in the first place.

Whatever the reason, as a CWU graduate and former GALA member, it was embarrassing to see.

While I commend the few couples that understood the gravity of representing an entire group of people, most of the participants seemed clueless. They joked, pretended to shove each other, and were extremely disrespectful to the audience and the presiding Reverend. The event is meant to represent the continuing struggle for marriage equality — it is a serious matter not to be taken lightly.

For those of us who have done LGBT advocacy work or have felt the fear of not being able to see our partners in the hospital, it was insulting and disheartening to see our very real sacrifices and anxieties treated so carelessly.

If GALA/EQuAL exists merely to provide a social atmosphere, that's fine. But if its members want equality, and if the group wants to be a force for progress, it must take its responsibilities seriously.

Jen Ham
CWU Alumni, Class of 2007

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