



Letters to:  
The Editor

LTE response

No one on your staff or in any letters comes close to matching the nice balance of eloquence and economy found in Brian Turner's Letter to the Editor of the last December issue of the *S&B*. As always, Mr. Turner offers profound information and insights in prose that manages modesty, passion, and clear readability. Although he has already graduated, it would be foolish for the *S&B* not to offer him a spot to sound off a couple times a month. I would certainly at least read his articles online, whereas most of the rest of the newspaper is just like it always has been: bland and whiney. I think you do a good job, but I think that students probably put their best writing into their studies, which leaves the campus newspaper with some scrappy leftovers that actually can be annoying to read. The bottom line: you have a great resource right in front of your nose. Mr. Turner could well be employed by far finer media that reach readers on the scale of hundreds of times the *S&B* readership. If you don't publish him, I can only encourage undergraduates to seek out Brian and talk to him. Just let him talk to you.

—Stephen Poland '02

Poor conduct

On Nov. 22, 2000, Rick Reilly, award-winning columnist for *Sports Illustrated*, wrote an article about a remarkable young man who was dealing with a difficult disease. "His extra efforts are never enough, which is why, on the pier, the suicide note is finished. Eight pages, perfectly neat, block letters. He tucks it into his coat pocket and heads for Walgreen's, where he will buy a bottle of poison, chug it, and at long last will come sleep." That's how Reilly captured the desperation that this man was feeling. Reilly later goes on to tell how this man was forced to quit the University of Wisconsin basketball team because of this desperation; instead he devoted the next year to helping not only himself, but others who suffered from his disease, as well as those in prison who were in need of guidance. He planned on going back to play basketball at Wisconsin, but his friends worried that "all it [would] take is one small incident" and he may be back where he started. Reilly finishes his column by saying, "He wants so badly to get better. Let's pray he doesn't spin back."

On Jan. 24, 2003, this man—Julian Swartz—visited Grinnell College as a member of the Carroll College basketball team. He has Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), and it turns out the stresses and rigor of Division I basketball proved to be too

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much for him. Our fans have a long tradition of heckling the visiting opponents, their fans, their cheerleaders and their coaches. This is almost always in good fun, and is no doubt an integral part of the game wherever you go. Since I came to Grinnell College, I have always been more than proud of the school I attend. It's okay to make fun of Julian Swartz for playing Division III basketball after being in the Final Four just three years ago, it's okay to make fun of him when he misses a shot, it's even okay to make fun of him because he's balding. On Saturday night, however, our fans crossed the line. When I

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heard the fans start chanting in unison, "O-C-D" or "make sure you're not stepping on a crack" during the game, it was my most embarrassing moment as a member of Grinnell College—and I know I wasn't the only one.

Maybe some of us had too much to drink, maybe we didn't know much of his past (although we had to know something to know he had OCD), and maybe it was just one of those situations where we thought what we were saying really didn't make a difference. Imagine if there were a player for Carroll who was mentally retarded—would we have chanted, "REE-TARD, REE-TARD"? I'm not looking to place blame on anyone; in fact many of my friends participated in this. I don't hold any grudges; I just hope we might learn something from this. Grinnell is supposed to be a place of enlightenment. That doesn't preclude us from heckling our opponents when they come and visit—we deserve to have fun as well. What happened on Saturday, however, was just plain ignorant, and I never thought I'd be concerned about that happening here at Grinnell.

—Brian Stoffel '04

To view the article mentioned above, visit [www.cnn.com/2000/fyi/news/11/17/julian.swartz/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2000/fyi/news/11/17/julian.swartz/index.html)

Tuition increase unacceptable

Increasingly I have heard sympathy expressed within the student body for the unprecedented tuition increases here at Grinnell. While all schools must look to the future, a simple examination of Grinnell's finances proves to be an exercise in frustration that will make even the most hardened students outraged over Grinnell's absurd contradictions in finance and tuition rates.

As endowments fall across the country, students and parents have had to pick up the shortfall, but Grinnell's endowments is not falling—instead it has risen at a prodigious rate. In 2002, according to a Feb. 22 article in the *The New York Times*, endowments fell 3.6 percent in 2002. Grinnell's endowment, as featured in the Jan. 25 edition of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* went up 18.8 percent, a number that ranked Grinnell seventh overall in endowment increase and number one in increase among endowments that have over 500 million-dollars—a category that includes almost all of our peer institutions. While schools like Emory and Dartmouth compensated for their huge losses by raising tuition less than five percent, Grinnell raised tuition by seven percent—one of the highest increases in the country.

The average University according to the same *Times* article, spends five percent of their endowment every year, although this year under extreme fiscal pressure, that number shrank to 4.8 percent. Grinnell's operating costs run around 50 million dollars meaning that Grinnell could not charge any tuition and still fall with an endowment spend-

ing goal of most colleges because of the one billion plus endowment.

Although there is something to be said for trying to save money for the future, 2002 represents the first year that college endowments have lost money in ten years says *The Chronicle*. Therefore, it is unlikely that a school with such a large endowment, and such a large endowment per student, will have serious financial problems in the future.

There are lots of good reasons why tuition should be kept to minimum in a place like Grinnell—its location, diverse student body, the fact that it is able to do so and make itself appealing to middle class students with reasonable tuition. Many of these excellent arguments have been printed in this paper. However, simply looking at the statistics, a seven percent tuition increase looks not only unacceptable, but frankly, mind-boggling.

—Aron Szapiro '04

Showing support for peaceful protestors

Editor,

We would like to show our support for Lee Mickey of Mount Pleasant and Christine Gaunt of Grinnell who are being threatened with prison for peacefully protesting the training of foreign terrorists at the U.S. Army School of the Americas in Columbus, Georgia.

We oppose the use of our tax dollars by the U.S. government to train foreign armies, mercenaries or terrorists. The U.S. government has provided aid, training and weapons to numerous foreign dictators and terrorists including Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, and the results have been disastrous. We prefer that our tax dollars instead be used to support constructive purposes such as education, health care, environmental conservation, job training, agriculture, alternative energy sources, etc. Based upon our faith in Jesus Christ, we believe that the support and training given to foreign armies and terrorists by the U.S. government is immoral. We believe that nonviolent peacemakers such as Lee and Christine are following in the path of Christ and we respect and support their ethical and true witness to the messiah's gospel of peace.

Christine and Lee are kind, loving, nonviolent citizens who would never do anything to intentionally hurt or harm anyone. We oppose their imprisonment and any other threat or coercion taken by government authorities to prevent them from freely expressing their opposition to training terrorists or dictators with U.S. tax dollars.

Typed,

Amy Spencer, Neta Faye Yoder, Dale and Jane Yoder-Short, Roger Farmer, Marvin K. Yoder, Bert and Laura Miller, Kenneth Hochstedler, Kathryn Slaubaugh, Jim Beasley, Michael Beasley, Shauna McCormick, Lois Roth, Jean Clougherty

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