

## EDITORIALS

## Declaring independence at U. of Redlands

A private university suspends a student newspaper over "slanted journalism." The student government withdraws funds. Students protest - naturally. Ho hum. Just another day in politically correct academia.



**BEN BOYCHUK**  
STAFF COLUMNIST

Not quite. The student editors of the University of Redlands Bulldog Weekly on Friday launched a GoFundMe campaign to take the campus newspaper independent. Taylor Holmes and Morgan York, the Bulldog's co-editors in chief, write that they hope to raise \$4,300 to allow the paper to

publish online and free from student government oversight.

The Associated Students of the University of Redlands in December cut the Bulldog Weekly's funds from \$40,000 annually to zero, placing the paper on "temporary hiatus" and putting paid staffers out of their jobs.

The student government had no shortage of justifications, which student body president Adam Gottlieb detailed in an email. Spelling errors, misquotations and a general lack of research and balance appears to have been the biggie. Student reporters solicited opinions from students on academic policies, for example, but often failed to reach out to the policymakers in the administration.

Pervasive bias - or the perception of it, anyway - was a problem, too. A university official confirmed for me that the Bulldog's story in November about a \$35 million donation to a university scholarship fund was the last straw. Evidently, a student reporter fed a quotation to a student, who supposedly said the gift would only benefit "rich, white males." Not good.

Every journalist is biased and objectivity in the news is largely mythical. It's possible, however, to strive for objectivity and write stories fairly, in spite of one's biases. Even students can act professionally. Contacting sources, double-checking facts, ensuring proper spelling and grammar - that's pretty basic stuff.

Some of the student government's other reasoning, however, is a bit strained. Gottlieb told me that stacks of hundreds of unread papers ran counter to the ASUR's commitment to "sustainable practices." But that's an easy fix: just cut back the print run and save a few thousand bucks.

Despite all these problems - and they're legitimate - the Bulldog's independence drive is a laudable one.

There's a valuable lesson here: government funding, whether it comes from the feds, the state or a student body, always comes with strings. Always.

And the fact is, freedom of speech and freedom of the press are not valued commodities on many college and university campuses these days. It's not uncommon to hear campus administrators and student do-gooders announce their undying allegiance to the First Amendment, followed by the killer caveat: "But ..." Although many college papers operate relatively free of student government meddling, funding often can be another "but."

"As long as we fund the paper, we would like a say in how it is written," Gottlieb told me. "We have never, and will never, try to censor the writers. We just want what they write to be of the best possible quality."

But if you believe in freedom of speech - as the student editors profess - then it's right and proper that they should put their money where their mouths are. Barring that, voluntary donations will do in a pinch.

Gottlieb says the Bulldog's editors and writers have always been able to publish independently. But, he explained, "as the Bulldog Weekly is within the ASUR structure, what they do end up publishing will not be affiliated with us." A committee of students and administrators has been meeting to rethink the structure of the paper, and, Gottlieb says, "an ASUR funded Bulldog Weekly will resume in the Fall semester."

Perceptive readers will note that I haven't quoted Holmes and York very much. Weirdly, my e-mail inquiries to the duo went unanswered. For a pair of editors trying to spread word of their cause to a broader audience, they seem less media savvy than one might expect.

I sent them \$50 anyway. Journalistic independence is an excellent cause ever in need of vindication, and student journalism is well worth supporting. Let them strike out on their own and make the very best of it.

Perhaps they've learned something valuable in all of this about the need to step up their game and act like professionals.

And if they fail, well, that's a valuable lesson, too.

Ben Boychuk (bboychuk@city-journal.org) is an associate editor of the Manhattan Institute's City Journal.

## Indio jail delays may soon end

Riverside County must consider alternatives to incarceration.

Last Friday, it was announced that plans for the Indio jail project has been approved by the fire marshal. The much delayed project is seen as a necessity for the county, which has struggled with jail overcrowding for years.

While it may very well be a necessity, given the projected population growth, it is important for the county to continue investing in alternatives to incarceration and not become dependent on locking people up.

"The East County Detention Center will boost the local economy with hundreds of construction jobs and 450 permanent positions thereafter," reads a statement by county supervisor John Benoit. "It will feature 1,626 state-of-the-art beds, representing a net addition of 1,273 beds to the county's overall detention center bed capacity."

The project, initially expected to cost about \$230 million, is now projected to cost around \$300 million. The jail will likely cost upwards of \$50 million a year to operate, driving up the Sheriff's Department budget, which is already the single largest budget item in the county.

In the 2014-15 fiscal year, the department will receive 35 percent (\$234 million) of county discretionary spending, up from 29 percent (\$188.2 million) just five years ago. With the

added jail and over 400 new sheriff's employees, the department is likely to crowd out spending on other things even further.

"Law enforcement is the embodiment of government," said Sheriff Stan Sniff. "Our deputies are the 24/7 face of government that the public sees and interacts with the most."

Indeed, public safety and law enforcement officers are important components and representations of government. By extension, incarceration is one of the strongest expressions of the force of government.

"Jails and prisons are big government in its clearest form," said attorney Michael Bien, who has litigated extensively in California on behalf of inmates.

That said, it is likely that the county really needs the new jail space so that it isn't forced to release thousands of people a year early.

"We're in dire need of beds, a lot of counties are," said Jerry Gutierrez, undersheriff of corrections in Riverside County. But, he said, "The key thing is to reduce recidivism and keep people from getting arrested in the first place."

Given how expensive and forceful incarceration is, the county must be careful to balance incarceration with evidence-based alternatives.

## Wrong about rights abusers

UC student leaders urge divestment from U.S.

Student governments across the 10-campus University of California system have developed a persistent urge to stray from their apparent mandates of seeking new ways to make students pay ever-rising activity fees, and weigh in on issues in which they have little involvement.

From issuing votes of no confidence for Gov. Jerry Brown, the UC Board of Regents and UC President Janet Napolitano to the more popular *cause célèbre*, divesting from companies that do business with the State of Israel, up till now those nonbinding resolutions have been nothing more than symbolic gestures.

Now, the University of California Student Association - an umbrella organization for a majority of the campuses' undergraduate and graduate student associations (and which purports to offer UC students, "a collective voice for all students through advocacy and direct action") - has taken a new stance.

On Feb. 8, a UCSA proposed resolution called for UC to pull its investments from

companies that do business with other nations - besides Israel - that the students deemed to be the greatest violators of human rights, including Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Russia, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Mexico and the United States of America.

That's right, America. While the resolution makes some fair points about crowded U.S. prison systems and the questionable ethics of using drones to kill suspected enemies, lumping the U.S. - and Israel - in with nations that routinely violate fundamental rights, while failing to mention far more egregious violators, like much of the Arab world, is certainly a sophomore stretch.

If UC student government leaders truly believe businesses should shun the United States over its rights record, they should lead by example and shun Pell grants, federally backed student loans, research grants, loan-forgiveness programs and all other forms of student aid offered by the repressive U.S. government.

### NATE BEELER / CAGLE CARTOONS



### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Double standard when it comes to truth?

Brian Williams has been caught fabricating or embellishing stories of his Iraq War reporting exploits. The worst possible result of his lie is that the U.S. public might have trusted his reporting and been unknowingly misled. He has become a pariah and lost his job, reputation and likely much of his future.

Oddly, many who now cry foul are smug and silent in the face of the tall tales, stretching of the truth, fabrications, misjudgments and perhaps outright lies that led the U.S. toward its invasion, overthrow and occupation of Iraq. The somewhat worse results of such fibs? A region mired in instability or civil war, the rise of ISIS, hundreds of thousands of dead

Iraqis, many tens of thousands of Americans injured and thousands of Americans killed. Those responsible for propagating the untruths in this case have never shown an ounce of shame and are held out as heroic by hoards of ardent supporters. I just don't get it.

**Chelsea Williams**  
Riverside

#### WHAT MERITS COVERAGE?

I noticed that on Feb. 17 the P-E's front page had a big picture of Obama waving goodbye after his stressful days of golfing. The world is falling apart. He's flying around on Air Force One for golfing. It must be nice. What really stood out, though, was that he makes the front page for golfing. But the day before, the P-E had the savage murders of a 21 Christians by "Muslim extremists" - a term Obama

won't use - buried on page 6 ["Video purports to show beheadings," News, Feb. 16]. I wonder, if Christians today slaughtered 21 Muslims by beheading them (which would not happen), would that be on page 6 or on the front page?

**Pete Harding**  
Riverside

#### DREDGING UP HISTORY

Re: "Obama in no position to pontificate" [Letters, Feb. 10]: In general, Democrats, since the founding of their party almost some 200 years ago, have done everything they accuse Republicans of doing or wanting to do - especially concerning their stereotype of evil, old, white Republican males, quite often by dredging up and selectively interpreting the long past to smear people in the present.

**Scott Brackett**  
Banning

## How Prop. 47 can improve safety in our communities

By **VONYA QUARLES**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I spend a lot of time thinking about beds - beds in jails, prisons, hospitals, homeless shelters and, most importantly, in a home.

I think about beds because my nonprofit, Starting Over, Inc., helps people in Riverside with no place to sleep with temporary housing after experiencing homelessness, incarceration, mental illness and recovery from drug addiction.

A lack of resources for drug and mental health treatment, affordable housing and re-entry services are longstanding problems facing Riverside County. That's why I'm excited about a major new development. In November, voters (including Riverside residents) passed Proposition 47, an initiative that decreases incarceration for low-level, nonviolent offenses and invests the savings into local prevention strategies.

Riverside badly needs this shift in priorities. Although it's California's fourth-largest county, only Los Angeles County sends more people to state prison than Riverside. Meanwhile, crowding in its jails led to unconstitutional conditions and lawsuits.

It is estimated that jailing someone for one year in California costs \$41,496. Comparatively, mental health treatment for a year costs \$12,000-\$20,000 and produces much better behavioral outcomes.

Similarly, a bed in a transitional housing facility costs \$10,000 annually, yet there is only one bed per every 100 square miles in Riverside County. What this means is that we invest too much in incarceration.

Enter Prop. 47. The law has already reduced the number of people sent to jails, which has allowed sheriff's departments, including Riverside's, to better prioritize existing space.

That's why my organization and others are traveling from Riverside and across the Inland Empire to San Bernardino today for a meeting about how Prop. 47 can improve safety in our communities. While the law is already transforming people's lives and reducing pressure on jails, its true promise is shifting investments from incarceration to mental health and drug treatment, K-12 programs and victim services.

To realize that promise, local officials must work with community organizations on a shared vision for a more effective justice system. We have already tried the approach of crowded cell-blocks without rehabilitation, and the result has been high recidivism rates. That led to us locking away - and writing off - thousands of people who can be productive members of our society.

Specifically, we need county boards of supervisors to determine how to calculate local savings from Prop. 47, and how treatment professionals, re-entry providers and other experts can inform how those savings are spent in new, more productive ways.

I spend a lot of time thinking about beds, but today I'll be talking about how we can put to bed the old, failed ways of thinking about safety and instead invest in communities, crime prevention and safety.

Vonya Quarles is an attorney and executive director of Starting Over Inc., a nonprofit in Riverside that helps the homeless, formerly incarcerated and mentally ill find transitional housing.

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Published every morning at 3512 14th St., Riverside CA 92501-3876 and delivered by contractor in Riverside and San Bernardino counties

THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE  
USES RECYCLED NEWSPAPER

ISSN #0746-4258  
VOL. 129 NO. 504