

ralph by ron wheeler



Party labels help define issues

As the Ides of March grow nearer and nearer, it is time to anticipate the ASUN Senate campaign, which already would have begun if filing deadlines had not been postponed.

The ASUN Senate was indirectly responsible for delaying the filing date, but they did so for a sound reason—so that candidates could continue to claim campus party affiliation on ballots.

Party affiliation is important because it is a literal impossibility for a student to get to know 40 or 50 candidates on their own merits. It usually takes a dedicated and politically minded student just to find out what the three or four parties stand for.

And three or four parties are emerging. It may sound strange that that many groups of people are banding together to take over the citadels of the third floor Union ASUN office.

That in itself is somewhat surprising, since it has been a pretty quiet year for the ASUN Senate. Not necessarily quiet in terms of Senate rumblings, but definitely lacking in assertiveness

and creativity on the part of both senators and executives.

There are no magic solutions, there never have been. As the campaign warms up, students should be wary of anyone who promises instant remedies and an uncluttered student utopian view.

Students also might look out for candidates who say they don't have a platform because they don't want to make false promises. There probably is no candidate who has ever delivered on all his campaign pledges. Yet platforms serve to give some insight into the priorities and thoughtfulness of the people who are asking for a vote.

At any rate, with a few parties in the contest, the elections may be more lively than last year. It perhaps would not be too much to expect to have some clearly defined issues, some real leadership during the campaign and some meaningful contact with the voters.

Students still may wonder why they should bother to get excited for the campaign, even a lively one. Political realities being what they are, student government does wield some power, does make some waves from the Senate to the NU Board of Regents meeting table.

And the student regent seat should be recognized as more than a high chair.

Vince Boucher

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The foreign study program not always a bed of roses

By Neil Koltz

It all began with the Tower of London. She had seen a picture of some American students in London laughing beside the Tower's famous chopping block in a poster on the English Dept. bulletin board. The poster announced, "The Great British Getaway! Study in Europe! Full Credit!" She sent for the forms, she enrolled, she paid her \$4,000 for the semester—a little steep, she thought at the time—and got away.

Back in the United States six months later, the registrar of her college told her that her getaway gets no credit—zero credits. She tried to contact the firm that ran the program and found only a closed post office box.

Each year about half the 30,000 to 40,000 American students who study abroad don't check out the programs in which they enroll with their home school. The results: promised credit disappears, programs are disbanded on the eve of the trip and students pay rip-off prices for what essentially are travel tours with a smattering of academics thrown in.

Although the number of students studying abroad has declined for several years because of inflation and increased interest in vocational (anti-unemployment) study, foreign study still carries a mystique. In these uncertain times, it might be phrased, "See Europe Before Its Gone."

Even if you skirt the disreputable programs, however, getting credit for foreign study experience can be difficult. Here are the major options and their pitfalls.

1. The foreign university. You could just cut out all the middlemen and enroll in a foreign university on your own. Nice and clean. But the foreign school may not let you in, and even if it does, your school in the United States may pretend it doesn't recognize you when you return.

To make a long story short, European universities usually won't accept American students with less than a junior status. They think that's the equivalent of their secondary school.

To get back at them, no American university will give a foreign student junior status for a secondary school diploma. A communications breakdown, to be sure.

About the only way to get credit for unsupervised work at a foreign university is to arrange a block of independent study courses with set objectives with each individual department at your school. That may be difficult, however, since you virtually must know what you want to learn and what books and resources you'll use, before you go in to order to structure the courses for approval.

If you care more about learning than credit though, go to a foreign school. Tuition rarely is more than \$100 a semester. Foreign universities allow students more independence and responsibility, a situation like that at some experimental colleges here. And many schools run a language and cultural program for foreign students to upgrade their ability to cope with formal university lectures.

Probably the best guide to independent foreign study is *This Way Out: A Guide to Alternatives to Traditional College Education in the United States, Europe and the Third World* (E.P. Dutton, New York, \$4.95).

2. United States college-sponsored programs. Because it's rough to get credit for independent foreign study, most students opt for a junior year or semester abroad program run by an American college. If your own school operates the program, you're home (or away, actually) free.

But if the program is run by another school, you may have trouble if (1) you try to take a course pass-no credit, (2) the field in which you plan to study is not offered at your home school, or (3) the field is offered at your school, but the particular course in that field isn't.

So you may find your local English Dept. arguing that a course you took on Shakespeare's sonnets from the lead-

ing expert at Oxford will not substitute for the required survey course taught by the local long-tenured patriarch.

No, it doesn't make sense. It means that you must bargain for almost every credit. Make sure after the deal is struck that you get your guarantee in writing from each department from which you want credit.

A good list of college-sponsored programs is contained in the *Whole World Handbook*, available for \$2.95 from the Council on International Education Exchange, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017. Other Council services like the International Student I.D. and charter flights are detailed in its free pamphlet, *The 1976 Student Travel Catalog*.

Summer and Interim programs are listed in *Summer Study Abroad* (Institute of International Education) and *Cooperative Listing of Interim Term Courses* (Association for Innovation in Higher Education), both of which your library should have.

3. Private agency-sponsored programs. You'll have to play the cautious consumer if you want to use one of these programs, since the rip-off potential is great and credit is problematic. Once you have the glossy catalog in hand, check for the following:

—Does the school or agency have a legally incorporated home office in the United States that can be held liable for swindles? Check that local secretary of state's office (corporation division) for the firm's corporate status and the Better Business Bureau for outstanding complaints.

—Does the catalog give full information on the course of instruction, quality of faculty members and sites available? Are you housed in an American ghetto or with foreign families? Are all the French professors imported from Alabama?

—Does the catalog provide full information on tuition and fees and provide for a fair and equitable refund policy? Are there any hidden costs?

If the school is eligible for the federal Guaranteed Student Loan Program, it must give you the above information under new regulations issued last year.

In addition, ask the school for a list of past participants whom you can question and a list of colleges which have accepted credit for its programs.

Even if you are not dealing with a private group, ask for a full breakdown of tuition and fees. In some cases, professors who have organized study abroad programs have taken on an extra stipend on the side, for instance, selling round-trip air fare to students for \$600 which they bought for \$300.

By the way, if you suspect that the program may be running a charter flight that will leave you at the gate, check with the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) Consumer Hotline, (202-382-6031).

4. Financial aid addendum. Yes, money does change the picture. To continue to receive federal Basic Grants, Work-Study, Supplementary Grants of National Direct Student Loans, you must be enrolled at an institution here while you are abroad.

You can, however, use Guaranteed Student Loans at many foreign universities and private schools abroad, even if you are not enrolled anywhere in the United States. Ask the school you are considering for its eligibility number under the Guaranteed Student Loan Program and check it with your State Guarantee Agency.

You can find out where that is either by calling the department of education in your state or by writing the Office of Guaranteed Student Loans, U.S. Office of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. 20202.

A good bibliography of private financial aid sources for study abroad, Scholarships and Fellowships for Foreign Study, is available free from the Institute of International Education, 809 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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letters to the editor

Schwartzkopf's values deplored

Regent Schwartzkopf's persistent pleading that "someone give me a benefit of having liquor in the dorms" smacks of a blind commitment to the principle of a technological society.

Notwithstanding the fact that cost/benefit approaches to life turn my stomach, Regent Schwartzkopf has the option to live a cost/benefit life if he so chooses.

But Regent Schwartzkopf does not have the option to impose his way of life on the students who are more concerned with the primary reinforcements of life necessary to establish a social identity.

It is the cost/benefit (objective) approach to life which causes us to switch from valuing an individual because he or she is a human being to valuing an individual because he or she is a social complaint, a reproductive but dispensable object.

Society has all sorts of ways to protect itself from socially deviant individuals, but what does an individual have to protect him or herself from a humanly deviant government?

Human beings were not designated to live cost/benefit lives. Will someone please inform Regent Schwartzkopf of this fact?

John H. Fischer

Film out-of-focus

On Wednesday, Feb. 11, I viewed *Barry Lyndon* at the Cinema I Theater. The image was consistently out-of-focus, and both projector's gaters were dirty, causing the top left edge of the film to be constantly obscured. After paying \$2.50 to see a film which relies on visual elements to a great degree, I can only relate my disgust that so little care was taken with the film. If, in the next few weeks, students going to see the film are greeted with the same conditions, they should complain to the management. I have no idea if this carelessness was caused by the projectionists' strike now going on, and I don't really care. Incompetency, for whatever reason, should be condemned.

John McMasters

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