



THAT'S SO GAY!

BY JESSICA KNOX - UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-GREEN BAY NRHH CC

Does that offend you? It does? Well, that's retarded. You're such a fag for letting that bother you. Oh look, you're reading this with dial up internet, that's so ghetto. Did someone Jew out on you so now you're broke? Man, you got gypped.

Are you offended? Or are these phrases a part of your everyday vocabulary? These phrases have worked their way into our everyday life and have become slang across the globe. Five and six year olds use the terms "gay," "faggot," and "retarded" to lob insults at one another and by the time they reach middle school "faggot" has become the most humiliating insult a person can receive ,according to a survey of middle school boys conducted by the American Association of University Women. Even though these are common phrases for us to use or hear, the exact definitions of them seem to be a little fuzzy.

"That's retarded" is often meant to say something is stupid or rubbish. According to dictionary.com "retarded" actually means "to cause to move or proceed slowly." "That's so ghetto" becomes a little unclear in what people use it for. Some see it as a way to associate something with a minority. Others see it as a way to describe something that's cheap or old. "Ghetto" is actually of European Jewish heritage. It was a rundown place where people were forced to live. The origin of this word being used in the present day slang comes from this definition because the Jewish were seen as a minority and the ghettos were a place that didn't provide a high-standard of living. This may also contribute to the phrase "Jew out." If a person "Jews out" they are not paying a debt to you because they are stingy. This phrase is directly related to the stereotype that Jewish people are very stingy with money. Along these lines is "I got gypped." This means I was cheated out of some money. This is a from the stereotype that all gypsies are thieves.

The phrase that has seemed to explode as an issue is "that's gay." Even though it is so commonly heard, no one seems to have a clear definition. A linguist who studied the usage of "that's gay" in a grade school found that none of the students knew what it meant; only that it was bad. Other studies asking people what the meaning is have found that it can mean too sincere, weak, boring, odd, weird, dorky, uncool, or stupid. The dictionary definition says that gay in fact means a merry, lively mood or a reference to one's

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- NACURH.org now publishes all of our newsletters online. Check out NBD publications for more information!
- If you want to get involved please contact us on the back page!

Next Issue: April 2007

THAT'S SO GAY! (CONTINUED)



sexual orientation.

So what's the big issue? I dare you to go to Facebook and search for "gay." There are 500+ groups that use "gay" in the title; the majority of which use it in a negative connotation. This has very recently become a huge issue in our high schools, as made evident in the Santa Rosa school district being sued. At Maria Carrillo High School, a student was disciplined for using the phrase "that's so gay." Parents are now suing the school district for punitive damages. Students at the school who were being interviewed see the phrase as not being offensive however the teachers in the school district feel differently as they will not tolerate the students using this phrase. This being brought forth as a legal matter shows the impact phrases like these are having on our society and has begun the questioning of them being socially acceptable.

Colleges have also been taking steps to eliminate potentially offensive phrases through hate speech codes. In 1990, 75 universities had hate speech codes. Within a year, the number increased to 300 and has continued to grow exponentially since. Hate speech codes vary in form. Some codes prohibit speech or conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or even offensive educational environment. Other campuses may ban behavior that could cause emotional distress. Other examples of communication punishable under speech codes include Holocaust denial, racist or sexist speech. Policies that are more stringent include a ban on anything that remotely could be offensive, such as ridicule against another person.

These phrases have made their way into our everyday life. They are heard in kindergarten, in high school, in college, and in the workplace. Some schools are starting the process of weeding out these phrases from our vocabulary, but in the end it is up to each of us to decide what is appropriate for us to be saying. You make the choice, is what I'm saying making sense, or is it gay? 🏳️

WHO WANTS A CONFERENCE ROMANCE?

BY DARYL LAWRENCE - MACURH RCC OF MINNESOTA AND SANDM

The following article does not necessarily express the thoughts or opinions of MACURH or NACURH, Incorporated. The statements below belong to the author acting of his own volition.

Conferences are special times. You get to hang out with people you get to see three times a year, expand your leadership horizons by attending outstanding programs, and recognize your peers for their achievements. However, sometimes the love bug bites. That's when things get interesting.

Here in MACURH we call them Conference Romances, or CRs for short. NEACURH calls them Conference Hookups, or CoHos. In general, they are looked down upon. Conferences are times for growing as a leader, not for dating, right? Maybe. At conference, you are surrounded by tons of people who are as motivated and committed as you are. It isn't out-of-the-ordinary to be attracted to someone who has, in essence, the same qualities you admire in yourself. While I can't sanction CRs, I can see how they are both plausible and possible.

Responsible student leaders should be focused on the conference, not on each other. Taking time out of the conference schedule to let a Conference Relationship blossom necessarily detracts from the core principle of that conference - developing as a student leader.

However, this doesn't mean that CRs should happen. Responsible student leaders should be focused on the conference, not on each other. Taking time out of the conference schedule to let a CR blossom necessarily detracts from the core principle of that conference - developing as a student leader. Personally, I have no problem with relationships developing outside of conferences. That is your time to dispense with. But when you are at a regional or national conference and pursuing a CR, you are using the region's or the nation's time to advance your social life. I think that is where the greatest misconception occurs. Relationships are a healthy part of life but they are not necessarily conducive to focusing on the tasks at hand at a conference. You might miss something important while you're making eyes at someone across the boardroom.

I know this article isn't going to stop the vast majority of you from having a CR. But do you really want to run the risk of catching a CTD or having a C-Baby? If you do choose to ignore my humble advice of focusing on the conference, I urge you to be smart.

All I really want of all of you is responsible behavior. Remember why you are at a conference and whom you represent. You are leaders on your campus who make good decisions - why else would you be involved in NACURH? So take a second and think about your purpose at a conference. Is it to have a hook-up? No. It's to represent your school well and bring back resources to your campus. So please, hold the urges back from three weekends a year and focus. Only you can prevent CRs. 🏳️

SEXY REGULATIONS

BY TONY FANGEL - NEW YORK UNIVERSITY IRHC ADVISOR

With all of the recent coverage of bias incidents and purported racism across the country it is easy to forget about another realm of college commotion: sexual policies and practices. Practically every university in the country has a number of policies that attempt to control or punish certain sexual practices by students and staff. These policies are broken into a few categories:

Sexual Harassment

This is the most common type of sexual regulation on campuses, as required by law. The United States statutes define sexual harassment as either being *quid pro quo* or *hostile environment* sexual harassment. Hostile Environment sexual harassment is when an unwelcome sexual advance (verbal or physical) is severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive so that it systematically denies the victim his or her ability to get an education. One isolated incident almost never counts as hostile environment harassment unless it is egregious and involves extremely outrageous conduct. An example would be someone who, before every class with Katie, makes cat calls at her and smacks her butt against her will.

Quid pro quo harassment is essentially “this for that.” This is when people in authority demand sexual activity or contact with an individual in return for better treatment (higher grades, employment benefits, black mail). This includes extortion and threats of violence. Quid pro quo harassment is most often regulated against professors, but can also apply to university staff members and even student leaders.

Some universities, notably private schools, regulate beyond these legal requirements. New York University, for example, considers sexual harassment to include the “excessive sexualization of the University environment.” Although legally able to prohibit such actions, issues of free speech and student expression may come into play in some cases. What’s important to note is that in the public university, the school may implement policies in attempt to squelch all sexual environments, however depending on the regulation it may also punish speech or conduct that is legally protected by law.

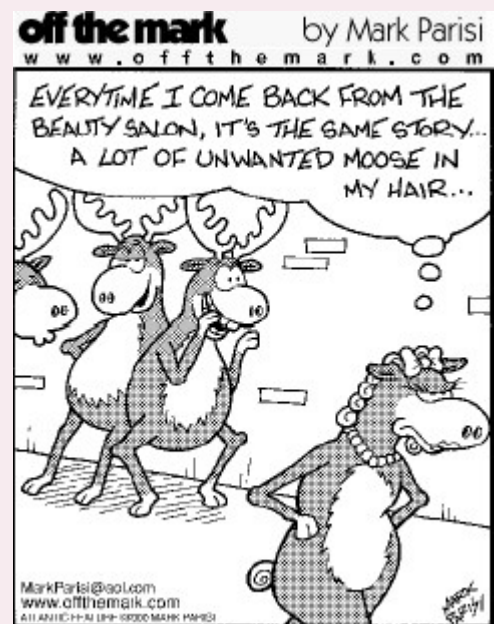
Consensual Relationships

Most universities also prohibit relationships when specific issues of power are involved. For example, the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota states: “Consensual romantic or sexual relationships between faculty and students, administrators and students, or between supervisors and employees, are inappropriate. The power differential inherent in such relationships compromises one's ability to decide freely.” Although not technically prohibited, the University strongly discourages these relationships because, especially in issues of sexual harassment, it is difficult to separate the consensual air of the relationship from the disparity of power between individuals. In addition, these relationships are discouraged because of the potential conflict of interest in upholding the relationship versus upholding one’s employee duties; favoritism and bias are usually cited as common reasons these types of relationships are disapproved of.

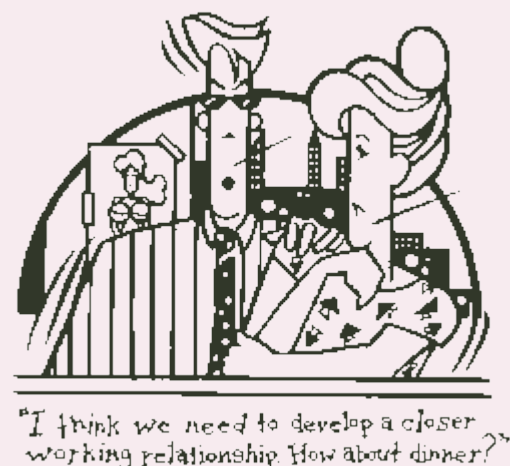
Some universities include in this the consensual relationship between a student in power and another student – such as the student body president and a senator. Although in most cases an administrator will not prohibit you from having these relationships, it is important to understand how others will perceive you and your partner. If you are an RHA president and you are involved with a hall president, others may believe you are giving preference to that hall in competitions or duties, even if you are not. For this reason these relationships may cause more problems than they are worth, so make sure you consider your public actions in these situations.

Co-habitation and Visitation

A number of universities also set regulations on when and how students can visit other students in residence halls. As most universities require overnight visitors to fill out guest passes, a host of mostly religiously-affiliated universities strictly prohibit members of the opposite sex from cohabitating – spending the night. Many Catholic universities such as Fordham, the University of St. Thomas, and Catholic University of America prohibit such activity and also limit the time members of the opposite sex can spend in your residence hall. At Fordham they have to leave by 3:30am every night of the week, but at St. Thomas members of the opposite sex have to leave by midnight during the week and by 2am on weekends. Some more strict schools such as Bethel University or Northwestern University in Minnesota require that a door be propped open at all times when a member of the opposite sex is visiting. The three-foot rule is also in place here, where there has to be three feet on the ground at all times (so there is no lying down with each other). This is not the case for all Catholic and religious schools, however, as larger schools like DePaul



NEACURH Harassment of MACURH?



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SEXY REGULATIONS (CONTINUED)

and Boston College both have 24-hour visitation.

Visitation hours are, in fact, a hot issue on many campuses. NACURH has an entire section of the RFI devoted to this issue, and a number of posts on the forums have discussed changing these regulations. Some schools allow each hall or even each floor to set their own rules for the year. This community-standards approach has proven successful at a number of schools. Your RHA does have the power to make suggestions for policy, and in almost every case your university's administration will listen to what you have to say. If you want to change these policies first get student opinion. Sign up for a Survey Monkey account and survey your entire resident population. If you have enough interest, draft a proposal and present it to Residence Life. In most cases they are responsible for writing and enforcing policy, but at other schools it may have to proceed up a ladder to the Board of Trustees.

Taste and Dignity

Many of you probably use sexual sayings or slogans to advertise events. This is an effective way of getting students' attention and can be a successful promotional tool. Although these practices are not prohibited at universities, administrators may discourage such activity. It is important to recognize your audience and purpose; if you are advertising a sexual-awareness event or some fun activities a sexual-themed advertising campaign may be appropriate, but sexualizing ads just for attention is not always tasteful. Even if humorous and catchy, when the event is an alumni-networking program or a classy end-of-the-year dance you may want to look for other means of publicity. Consider the messages you are sending to students – don't run from sexy ads or sexual programs, but don't overly sexualize when it isn't necessary. 🏠

ADVERTISEMENTS, SEX, AND HETEROSEXISM

BY VAL ERWIN - MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY NCC



Love is in the air, the reason being we just finished up February the month of cupid and good old St. Valentine. In the month where RHAs, hall governments, and other groups start to think about dances and date parties; this is the time of year when I was first introduced to the word heterosexism. I was a freshmen RHA representative from the Council for Students with Disabilities and there was a group asking for money from RHA for a dance when one of the other representatives asked "What word are you using for the flyer in reference to your date?" The group responded with the typical girlfriend or boyfriend. The representative then said, "Why you don't use partner so you aren't saying it is particularly for heterosexuals or being heterosexual?"

I decided to ask 7 schools in Indiana and Michigan a couple questions on ads including "Do you feel that the flyers referred to partners or bring a girlfriend or boyfriend when referring to a dance or a co-ed gathering?" or "So do you feel they show and encourage more heterosexual couples or both homosexual and heterosexual couples?" For the first question almost all of the schools said it didn't really mention anything about a date. So you were just encouraged to go to the dance, which I thought was interesting. If there was no date encouraged then it was specifically girlfriend or boyfriend as the word used. On the second question it was completely unanimous that heterosexual couples were the ones being shown on campus advertisements.

The next question when it came to advertisements was about if any of the advertisements in your hall have been considered sexual. None of the schools said any of the ads were too sexual. The reason I asked this question was because one of the programs we put on in RHA called Pimpology, a program about ads were informed by administration, who were co-sponsoring the program that they were too sexual. However this seems to not have been a problem at any other schools I talked to. So start thinking of different types of advertisements that take this into consideration. 🏠

STEREOTYPES OF THEMED HOUSING

BY MARLEY BLONSKY - UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON NCC

The newest trend in residence hall communities is creating 'living-learning communities.' In these specially themed halls, or part of halls, students all share some sort of common interest- from being a member of the honors college, to being pre-engineering majors, to all being first year students. At some Universities there are very few themed housing options but at others seemingly every community is themed in some aspect or another. Here at the University of Washington we only have a few themed living options including the Honor's house, Engineering House, SAFE community (Substance and Alcohol free community), International House, and an entire building of First Year Experience.

Working as an orientation leader last summer, one of the questions I was most frequently confronted with was “Do certain students live in one building or another? Like is one hall the party place? Do all the nerds live in one building?” and so on. I know what my experience here at UW has been like in working with themed housing but every school is different.

At the University of Washington, we have over 5,000 students living in the residence halls, creating a very vibrant and diverse community. While some stereotypes do exist, for the most part all halls are inclusive and fun communities to live in. In polling students at UW, the following are verbatim responses:

Tell me about the students who live in the Honors House:


- “They tend to study a lot more than we do on my floor.”
- “I go there when I need math help.”
- “We’re all really good friends who are committed to our academics but also have a lot of fun”

Tell me about the SAFE house:

- “They don’t do anything bad.”
- “The RAs are really strict.”
- “We know how to have fun in different ways. We’ve been known to take more than a few late night IHOP runs”

What do you think of when I say Lander Hall? (Lander is the first year experience hall)

- Parties
- Always loud
- Lots of friends and always something to do

In closing, there are obviously some stereotypes that do exist about themed housing but like all stereotypes, there is usually limited truth to them. I would like to do further research on themed housing in other schools and see what stereotypes exist there. If you have input on this topic or a unique perspective to share, please email your input to blonsm@u.washington.edu and I will do a follow up article next month! 

CASE STUDY WINNER!

If you remember, last month’s issue of the *Mosaic* gave you all the opportunity to be recognized at NACURH by presenting a solution to this task force’s national case study. Congratulations to the **University of Wisconsin-Green Bay** for submitting the winning solution! UW-GB delved into the issues with student employment and laws, addressing the issue within the community, and letting RHA as a whole present a solution. The case study was presented as follows:

THE SCENARIO:

"You are the RHA President. Yesterday your school newspaper published an article announcing the fact that one of your RHA e-board members is in a Facebook group called 'white=right'. Your school's administration has asked that you address this issue before it gets out of hand. You approached the e-board member today and she claims freedom of speech. What do you do?"

THE SOLUTION:

As stated in the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay’s Statement of Civility and Tolerance, “Bigotry will not go unchallenged on this campus.” Watching one of the faces of campus show discriminatory behaviors is something that cannot be overlooked, especially on a smaller campus such as the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. Here, this e-board member is most likely seen as a leader in several different positions for the university. Because of this, immediate action must be taken to deal with the situation at hand. The first step would be to deal directly with the student who had joined the Facebook group; the second step being to find a way to bring a positive outcome from this situation.

The next time the president approaches the e-board member, the organization’s advisor should be present, not only as a mediator, but also a resource for information about the University’s policies. During this confrontation two main points need to be brought up. First, the e-board member is seen as a face of RHAA. Any image she portrays for herself, she is also portraying for the entire organization. This image will affect not only her, but also everyone who is associated with RHAA. Consequences for her actions will fall upon the organization as a whole.

The second, more serious issue is that this e-board member is a university employee because she is paid a stipend each semester she serves on the board. As a university employee she must be willing to keep an open mind and not participate in discriminatory activities. The University’s Civility and Tolerance Statement should be brought forward. In this statement it clearly says that as a student she agrees to be committed to the principles of civility and tolerance because it is her choice to be a part of the UWGB community. It says that “no one has the right to denigrate another human being on the basis of race” and that all who participate in these behaviors, verbal or written, will be subject to the University’s disciplinary process.

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LINKS

Listing of Catholic colleges:
<http://www.catholiccollegesonline.org/>

Get more higher education news:
<http://www.insidehighered.com>

Get school statistics
<http://www.collegeboard.org>

NACURH 2007 Website:
<http://www.mio.uwosh.edu/nacurh>

RHA WEBSITE SPOTLIGHT

University of the Pacific:
<http://www.pacificrha.org>



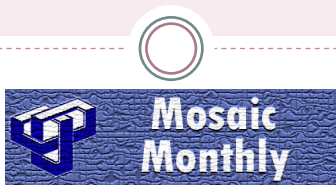
NACURH Task Force on Social and Diversity Issues

E-mail the Task Force Chair:
sageleader@gmail.com

If you have any suggestions, comments, or criticisms feel free to contact us. If you would like to get involved, please e-mail the Task Force Chair.

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CASE STUDY WINNER! (CONTINUED)

After explaining all of these facts to the e-board member, the option to resign will be given to her. If she chooses not to, the option to have her removed from the board permanently will be brought to the entire board. Here general members will be informed of all that has happened and what the university policy is on this situation. Because the members each come from their own respective building in housing, all of housing's opinions will be represented at this meeting. This will give the campus's feelings on what needs to be done with this e-board member.

With no regard to the outcome of the vote, the second step must still be taken. This unacceptable behavior does bring about an opportunity for the board. With this now being a public matter, RHAA will need to begin having more discussions about diversity and how to promote diversity in the residence halls and apartments. Not only will these topics that are often pushed aside be brought into the light, but there will also be opportunities for programming about diversity.

Though there will be damage to RHAA's reputation no matter what steps are taken, these steps will help minimize the damage caused. When the e-board member is dealt with directly and immediately, it shows that the organization and the university as a whole are serious about these matters and will not stand silently about them. A door of opportunity is also forced open to RHAA. They must begin to take bigger steps towards promoting diversity and acceptance in housing. Through dealing with this situation, the organization will grow and come out with its eyes opened a little more to the realities of the world we live in. 

CONGRATULATIONS TASK FORCE MEMBERS!

As every region's No Frills conferences have wrapped up and bids have been awarded, our very talented Task Force members have won some prestigious awards and positions, including our newest member Matt Mehlhoff!



Daryl Lawrence
MACURH
Director-Elect



Marley Blonsky
PACURH
Director-Elect



Matt Mehlhoff
MACURH
NCC of the Year

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Val Erwin, NCC, Michigan State University, GLACURH
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