

May 8, 2007

Ralph J. Hexter, President  
R. Michelle Green, Dean of Student Services  
Hampshire College  
893 West Street  
Amherst MA 01002-5001

To President Hexter and Dean Green:

In response to your letter, we would like to make clear that *The Climax* has no official position on identity-based housing. As stated on page 3 of the April 25th issue, "Articles written for the Opinion section of *The Climax* reflect the viewpoints of individual writers, not the paper as a whole."

Justin Lutz was approached by *The Climax* to take part in a larger debate concerning identity-based housing at Hampshire College, as were other members of the Hampshire community including the Students of Under-Represented Cultures and Ethnicities (SOURCE). Mr. Lutz was the only student to respond, and therefore presented the only available position on the subject. While we regret offering only one side of a sensitive issue, we stand by our decision to include Mr. Lutz's writing in the Opinion section of our publication.

Although we appreciate the administration's involvement in the dialogue surrounding identity based housing and our decision to print Mr. Lutz's piece, we are concerned by certain aspects of your response. Presenting the administration's view to the public before discussing the matter with *The Climax* was inappropriate and unprofessional. Many of the misunderstandings regarding our policies that your letter includes could have easily been answered before addressing the community at large.

The personal nature of some of your criticism is also extremely disappointing. By claiming that Mr. Lutz's piece is "certainly not a good example of either analysis or opinion," you crossed the line separating civility in disagreement from personal attack. While the administration did not actively seek to censor Mr. Lutz, we feel that your actions served to delegitimize his position without addressing the body of his argument. This type of condemnation promotes public grandstanding at the expense of open discussion.

In conclusion, we affirm the importance of a free press at Hampshire College and believe that meaningful discussion requires an open and honest engagement with potentially unpopular viewpoints. We are leery of high-ranking members of the college administration using the power of their office to target the views of individual students. Hampshire students must be comfortable in their ability to express any opinion, and we hope that *The Climax* will continue to facilitate important discussions on campus.

Sincerely,

The Climax Editorial Board

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