

opinion

Letter to the editor: Eagles for PRIDE

EAGLES FOR PRIDE EXECUTIVE BOARD
@Eagles_Pride

Most people on campus are aware of Eagles for PRIDE, the LGBTQ+ group focused on creating community for marginalized members of society, but not everyone is, we're sure.

History lesson: Eagles for PRIDE is the third iteration of people trying to form a GSA (gay-straight alliance) on AU's campus for over a decade. Eagles for PRIDE is so far the longest-running group to date, and we take great pride in that fact.

However, Eagles for PRIDE, unlike many groups on campus, is a provisionally chartered group. Most student organizations on campus have full-organization status—this means they receive things like a budget, a bank account, and the university's stamp

of approval to exist. Provisionally chartered groups do not receive those three things. Provisional charters exist to give a group time to prove itself—to prove whether students really want that particular group or not, which manifests itself in members' attendance and participation.

Most provisionally chartered groups receive a full charter by the end of the academic year they started the process. Eagles for PRIDE is going on the third year of being a provisionally chartered group.

To us, this seems to stem from two things: fear and money. People in power (who have power due to holding donation money) seem to fear the LGBTQ+ community, at least that's the message we are receiving. They fear the "slippery slope," as we've heard time and time again, due to the common but inappropriate viewpoint that

the church is against gay people, so AU should be as well. Setting aside the fact that plenty of Christians don't discriminate against gay people, what about our famous free speech declaration last year?

As quoted in the article on AU's website from October 3, 2017, "Although members of the Ashland University community are free to criticize and contest the views expressed on campus, and to criticize and contest speakers who are invited to express their views on campus, they may not obstruct or otherwise interfere with the freedom of others to express views they reject or even loathe."

How is it then that our group is at this moment experiencing obstruction and interference with our freedom to express our views? There have been explicit discussions in the past that a GSA would be awarded full organization status if the group took out all refer-

ences to the LGBTQ+ community, instead focusing on "diversity" as a whole. Today, there are implicit conversations of this.

We might be able to receive full organization status if we tone down our commitment to the LGBTQ+ community. But here's the reality: regardless of the fact that it's 2018 in other areas of the world while this university seems stuck in 1958, there's still the university's commitment to free speech that seems to be in direct contention with the way our group is being treated.

Yet, those organizations with controversial, but right of center ideals, hold full organization status while our group, dedicated to building community for LGBTQ+ students and to educating members of the university community in the hopes of preventing hate crimes and promoting student safety instead (left of center ide-

als), is going on our third year of limbo and discrimination. There is obvious bias going on, and when the university has made written statements to a commitment to a lack of bias, this feels particularly hypocritical.

As a note, Eagles for PRIDE is not seeking to silence voices critical of the LGBTQ+ community or to prevent speakers from attending campus, nor are we arguing for drastic changes in Ashland University policy. Rather, we are requesting the same rights to assemble and argue for our community (with university approval and recognition) that any other group receives from Ashland University.

-Executive Board of Eagles for PRIDE

To submit your own letter to the editor email bgannon@ashland.edu



JULIA SWANSON-HINES

The members of Eagle for PRIDE, from left to right, Chyann Collins, Priscilla Nicole Nordman, Julia Swanson-Hines, Katie McKay and Jessica Myers.

Why can't dorms have AC?

ZACH READ
@zach_read20

Why do the dorm rooms at Ashland University not have any air conditioning? That is the question that every student living at AU has had since they moved in.

When students moved into AU four weeks ago, they were met with blistering heat that made them want to go back home to their nice air conditioning.

Massive heat waves swept across the nation as most college students moved back to school in their air conditioned dorms, while Ashland students moved into their 90-plus degree rooms.

There are so many issues that come with not having air conditioning in the room.

1. How does a university that extremely emphasizes "the accent on the individual" not provide their students with the best living con-

ditions?

2. How can AU compete with other schools that have air conditioning? It would seem to me that retention could suffer by not investing in air conditioning because they are losing potential students as well as students who are transferring out after a year.

3. The health reasons are endless. Students run the risk of receiving heat stroke or heat exhaustion because the living space that they are expected to relax in is unbearable.

4. Student athletes are at major risk as well. Athletes are out in the heat for multiple hours a day, and then come back to their dorms to remain in the same heat that they were out in all afternoon.

Athletes are told to hydrate and relax after the long workouts in the sun, but find it hard to do that when there room is not a cool place where they can find refuge.

5. Not having air conditioning in

the dorms hurts recruiting for the athletic teams. During the recent heatwave a recruit for an athletic team came on campus and stayed the night with potential future teammates in their dorm room in Clayton hall.

That recruit had to sleep in the dorm that was not bearable to sleep in and that was not allowed to contain a personal air conditioner. Do you think that recruit would want to come to AU after that experience?

6. Students are expected to perform their best in the classroom, but have a hard time getting enough sleep at night because of the temperature in their rooms. How are we supposed to focus and perform our best when we are not well rested and on edge due to the heat?

7. Three weeks ago, it was unbearable to sleep in the dorm rooms, so some students resorted

to sleeping in the student center and even a group of Ashland University men's basketball players slept in Kates Gymnasium one night just for the A/C.

8. The sorority apartments in Clark hall have window air conditioning units in the living rooms and the fraternity houses have window units as well. How can there be window units in there but "the residence halls cannot sustain window units." I believe if the university tried hard enough, they could find ways to make it work.

9. For the most part, we are just talking about when school is in session, but a lot of athletes move in early over the summer and have to deal with not having A/C much longer than anyone else.

10. The dorms also become occupied over the summer, different groups and camps come in for a week or so at a time and have to stay in the dorms. Some of these

groups may be high school students wanting to come to AU and the dorm room heat does not leave a very good image for the university.

Your students are not happy. Everybody cannot be a people pleaser, but when you have the entire student body that lives on campus angry about the heat and the fact that there is no A/C in our rooms, that is an issue.

However, there are reasons as to why personal air conditioning units cannot simply be placed in the dorm buildings.

After speaking with Rick Ewing, the Vice President of Operations and Planning here at Ashland University, I was able to get a clearer understanding as to why they have not yet put air conditioning in the residence halls.

Read the rest at Au-Live.com

the Collegian

EDITOR'S NOTE

The views expressed in the columns do not necessarily reflect the views of *The Collegian* or Ashland University.

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The Collegian
137 Center for the Arts

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The Collegian is a student-run paper, published weekly.

The Collegian is printed by the
Wooster Republican Printing
Company.

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