

# EDITORIAL

## 'Tragic' failure of university system



**THE UHCLIDIAN**  
The UHCLIDIAN is a homonym for Euclidian – a word play using the name of the famous Greek mathematician Euclid and the university's acronym, UHCL.

**Editor**

Paul Matthew Fourcade

**Assistant Editor**

Roger Roberts

**Designers**

Viktoryia Aksionava  
Feride Muezzinoglu

**Reporters/Photographers**

J.T. Garrett  
Crystal Nalini Goodpaster  
Mercedes McCrory  
Matthew Shaw  
Joaquin Solis

**Broadcast Reporters**

Kimberly Erwin  
Mercedes McCrory

**Videographer/**

**Video Editor**  
Canthy Jiminez

**Web Master**

Kimberly Erwin

**Ad Manager/**

**Production Assistant**  
Lindsay Humphrey

**Faculty Adviser**

Taleen Washington

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The UHCLIDIAN is a public forum and will print letters to the editor subject to the following: letters must be no longer than 500 words. Where necessary, letters will be edited for grammar, spelling and style requirements. Letters must be signed and include the writer's full name, address and phone number. The editors reserve the right to refuse letters, announcements and contributed articles deemed libelous.

**Address letters to:**  
UHCLIDIAN,  
UH-Clear Lake  
2700 Bay Area Blvd., Box 456  
Houston, TX 77058  
**Phone:** (281) 283-2570  
**Fax:** (281) 283-2569  
**E-mail:** uhclidian@uhcl.edu

Sometimes the events within a newsroom unfold like a Shakespearean drama, complete with tragic flaws and moral dilemmas. Journalists and their editors find themselves, like Hamlet, faced with a most difficult question: to print, or not to print?

More often than not, the answer to that essential question is obvious. However, there are times when finding an answer requires serious soul searching. For example, when information comes to light that is of particular importance to the public, yet could have grave consequences for the parties involved, should the story run? Aye, there's the rub.

The UHCLIDIAN staff recently toiled with the decision of whether or not to run our lead story. Ultimately, the editors chose to run it.

The ethical quandary was presented in the form of a tip: police

were investigating suspicious activities that had occurred in an office suite on the university's campus, and the Dean of Students was questioned about his involvement. It was clear that this story required delicacy; if not handled properly, the story could have turned out to be nothing more than tabloid trash of the Bennifer-Brangelina-TomKat nature.

The editors had to reconcile several issues before arriving at their final decision to print, including: the use of anonymous sources and the responsibility to protect those sources' identities; how to overcome various obstacles to obtain information; and, most importantly, the potential fall out that publication could bring for all parties involved.

The watershed moment did not come until those directly affected agreed to go on record so long as they remained anonymous.

According to UH-Clear Lake's mission statement, "The university's faculty, staff and administrators are committed to providing a humane, responsive and intellectually stimulating environment for productive learning and working."

Where was that commitment for the victims of the "suspicious" incidents?

The ordeal these employees endured was drawn out much longer than it should have been. They were left in a state of limbo for more than two months, silenced by persons of authority, and instructed not to seek help through Human Resources. How is that a "humane, responsive and intellectually stimulating environment?"

Feeling abandoned by those to whom they turned for help, the victims continued to work in an environment they felt was unsafe and unhealthy. How is this an environment "productive" to

working?

The university has a system in place to deal with circumstances such as these, but somewhere along the way, it failed. Perhaps it is time to re-evaluate the procedures for dealing with such circumstances. The employees' cries for help went unheard for too long.

Perhaps the next time university officials are confronted with such a situation, they will be able to respond in a more productive and timely manner, having seen how easy it is for mistakes to be made.

Hopefully the article will become a vehicle for change and progress within the university. This is why the editors chose to print the article despite the controversy involved.

The paper must be the voice for those who feel silenced.

After all, as Shakespeare reminds us, "our remedies oft in ourselves do lie."

## Addiction to distraction

By ROGER ROBERTS  
UHCLIDIAN

Daily exposure to 24-hour news numbs one to the endless supply of tragedy in the world.

When asked why this is the case, many people give similar answers. They say things such as, "humanity's ability to feel empathy toward another has practical limits," or "Americans are exposed to so much violence in movies and video games that the 'real world' no longer shocks them in a way that truly matters."

From the nightmare of Katrina to the ongoing war in Iraq, recent history has provided an endless supply of "good news for people who love bad news." Yet, who would know these tragedies were ongoing if they did not watch, read or listen to daily news-casts?

Step outside tomorrow, and the sun will shine, birds will sing, and people will continue to spend money as if they had it. The day will play itself out as if America was not mired in a seemingly endless war, Iran was not seeking nuclear weapons, and our liberties were not being sacrificed at the altar of fear. No need for victory gardens here.

Instead, we, the people, will continue to prevent ourselves from recognizing the more "weighty" problems of the world by watching, reading and listening to endless streams of useless trivia designed to entertain rather than inform.

From Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes to the Duke Lacrosse team sex scandal to the missing white-girl-of-the-month, 24-hour news has a distraction to fit your every need.

The line between The National Enquirer and reputable news outlets erodes on a 24-hour basis.

To verify this fact, one need only browse the daily top stories on web sites such as CNN, MSNBC and Fox News. There, you will find articles on the "dire threat" of global warming next to stories about Britney Spears' inadequacies as a new mother. This strange dichotomy of topics had reduced the impact of critical stories while simultaneously demeaning the overall profession of journalism.

Some believe the media itself bears final responsibility for lowering the standards, which define a "real news" story. But sadly, we, the people, have only ourselves to blame.

We forget newspapers, television news and car dealers all share one common goal: to make money. And the first and most important rule in turning a profit is to understand that the customer is always right; we are an on-demand people for an on-demand culture.

And if we, the people, demand meaningless minutiae to fill in all the blanks, all the

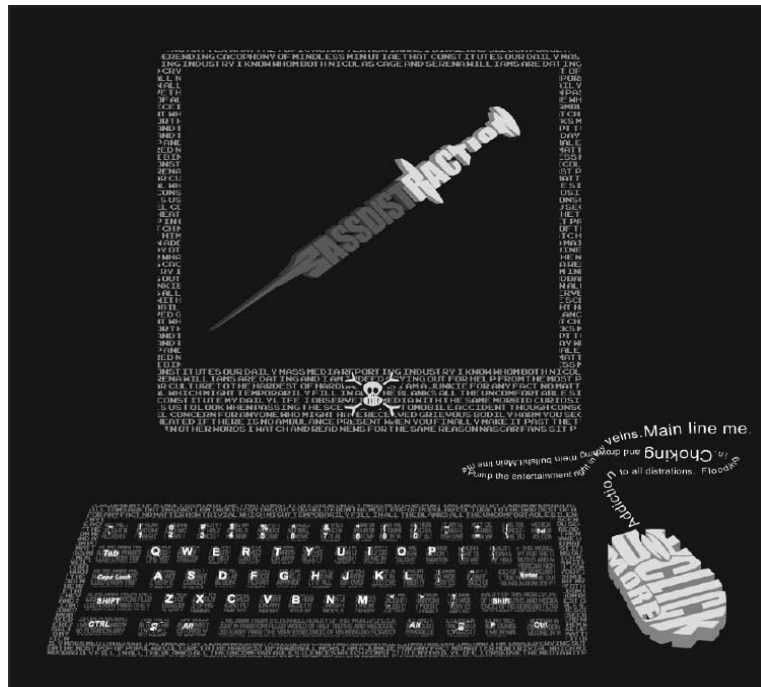
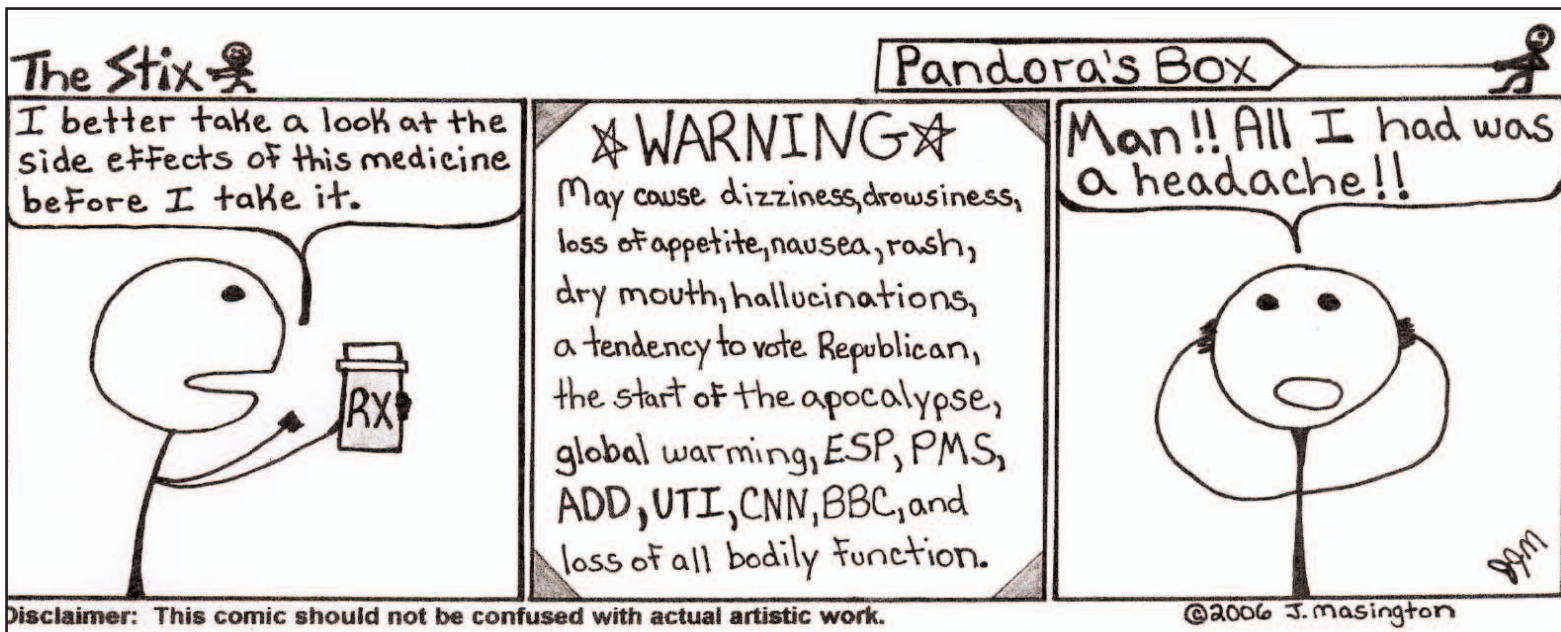


ILLUSTRATION BY ROGER ROBERTS: UHCLIDIAN

uncomfortable silences of our daily mundane lives, then we, the consumers, get what we deserve.

After all, who knows when an exhaustive study on Tom Cruise's views on Scientology might come in handy? In America, inquiring minds have an inalienable right to know.

Think about it. You could find yourself in an awkward social position tomorrow. What would you talk about if not some trivial piece of front-page gossip? Even the most socially inept person knows you should never discuss religion or politics-what a brave new world we live in that allows us to avoid any conversation that actually matters.



Disclaimer: This comic should not be confused with actual artistic work.

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