

Message

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Subject: Re: news coverage

I saw Peter's note but think we have tried being quiet and it's not working. He's right about one story begatting another but I fear that without some response from the academic community we are going to just keep swinging in the wind. I agree fully w him that crisis mgt folks need to be engaged much better than they are, based on what we are seeing.

What troubles me greatly about the current dialogue is its attack on the value of independent study, per se and its attack on the integrity of African and Afro-American Studies program.

Here is a thought to consider:

When we reset the rules for independent study, I received an eloquent letter from Jim Peacock, former faculty chair and professor of anthropology. In it he mentioned how many wonderful, scholarly independent study projects he'd overseen. Under the new guidelines he will no longer be able to have as many scholars do independent work, which he found very troubling. Basically he was saying "don't through out the baby w the bathwater." His letter was very thoughtful about the value of independent study for a research university

I think we are letting the newspaper control the rhetoric here and that needs to shift back to us. What if we asked Jim to write an op ed piece on the value of independent study and why don't we also ask the faculty to start speaking out on this issue. They could discuss both the value of independent study - thereby hopefully debunking the myth that all are bad -- and reemphasize what a strong dept our African and Afro-American Studies program is.

Maybe a letter writing effort by faculty members? I will be happy to contact Jim if you all think this is a good idea.

We need to take back the spin here. The N&O is implying that the AAS program is slack (personally I think their constant hammering of the AAS is to play to subtle racism within their readership). We have a strong department in AAS and we have scholars -- even young, budding scholars -- who benefit from the independent studies program.

So those are me thoughts. If we do something it shd b relatively soon. If you disagree w this recommendation that is fine too.

SSR

Sallie Shuping-Russell