



Editorial cartoon angers students

Group wants Ka Leo to fire staff member

by Ruth Shiroma
Special to Ka Leo

UH students from various ethnic minority groups say they "will use whatever means necessary" to respond to a controversial cartoon and column appearing in today's Ka Leo, group spokeswoman Mino'aka Fitzsimmons said.

But she declined to give further details, saying "we do not want to give out our strategy."

Students Against Racism, a collaboration of minority groups on campus, met with Ka Leo editors in the courtyard yesterday, demanding that Editor in Chief Jennifer Ablan not print columnist Grant Crowell's cartoon and column. SAR says Crowell's work is racist.

The students also demanded that Ka Leo fire Crowell, an undergraduate art student who, in March 1991, was fired from his graphics editor position by then-editor K. Mark Takai.

Ablan denied the demands, saying Crowell has constitutional rights to free expression. She offered them a space to respond in a column, she said, but the students declined.

The students allege that Crowell is spreading racist ideas against native Hawaiians in his column and cartoon, which critique UH Hawaiian Studies professor Haunani-Kay Trask's poem "Racist White Woman," a selection in her recently published book, "Light in the Crevice Never Seen."



photo by Tom Bamberg/Ka Leo

And The Band Played On ...

UH Marching Band trombones line up, receding into the distance. The band played during Saturday's football game.

See related
stories and cartoon
on page 4.

Trask told Ablan that she didn't care who critiqued her book, as long as it wasn't Crowell, Ablan said.

Members did not want to give details on how they learned about Crowell's column and cartoon, but said they were informed by a Ka Leo staff writer.

None of the angry students had seen the cartoon or read the column by the time they confronted the editors yesterday. But "we heard," that it was a negative depiction of the Hawaiian culture, some students said.

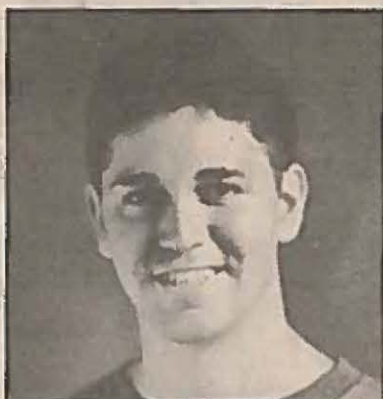
"What does it look like?" one student asked, followed by another who asked, "Can we see it?"

Editors did not release the work to the students.

Crowell denies that his work is racist, but says it instead sends a message about "how things can be interpreted differently ... it's about absurdity and reality."

Students based much of their concern on Crowell's history with Ka Leo. He was fired in 1991 after Takai learned that Crowell had helped create an anonymous derogatory flier aimed at then-columnist Doug Margolis. See related story, "Crowell."

Although Ka Leo had offered the students a chance to write a column that would run alongside Crowell's work, the students



Grant Crowell

rejected the opportunity, asking "how can you debate racism?" Fitzsimmons said.

"We're giving you the chance to respond," said Ka Leo Managing Editor Christie Williams to the students.

"No," Fitzsimmons said. "No compromise."

She said if the anti-racism group responded through a column, it would be "after the injury," like telling a man he can beat his wife, as long as she can use the phone afterwards to call the police.

Asked if confiscating newspapers from bins by this morning was an option, Fitzsimmons, who identified herself only as a student from the anti-racism group, answered, "No comment on that," as she walked away from the courtyard.

In the past few years, the stealing of college newspapers containing controversial stories has become a problem at many colleges, including here at the University of Hawaii-Manoa.

The flap over today's cartoon and column began Sept. 22, when the informal anti-racism group wrote a letter to Ablan and Williams demanding that Ka Leo fire Crowell, discontinue "all articles with sexist/racist overtones, educate and implement articles about the dynamics of colonialism, racism, sexism and homophobia," and require all staff members to take "anti-racist, colonialism and sexist education workshops."

Ablan told the students Crowell would not be fired.

"We cannot punish Grant for exercising his constitutional rights of free expression," she read to the students from her prepared



Haunani Kay-Trask

statement. "This is our rationale for the permissibility of his editorial cartoons and columns."

"Please note that Grant's views do not necessarily reflect those of Ka Leo's editors, writers or columnists."

Ablan instead invited the students to apply for positions as Ka Leo staff writers or columnists.

"We will try to educate and implement articles about the dynamics of colonialism, racism, sexism and homophobia," Ablan said. "And I encourage all of you to help us accomplish this."

Crowell and controversy

by Ruth Shiroma
Special to Ka Leo

Grant Crowell has a way with controversy.

He was fired from the Ka Leo staff in March 1991 for circulating a derogatory flier about then-columnist Doug Margolis.

According to reports, the flier called Margolis "the bastard offspring of a Jesse Helms/Tipper Gore drunken sex romp."

Crowell's message was in response to Margolis' public criticism of a Ka Leo staff writer's coverage of an anti-war demonstration.

Ka Leo Editor in Chief Jennifer Ablan said she knew only a "vague history" of Crowell when she hired him.

But Crowell has not violated any Ka Leo editorial policy as a staff member under Ablan's leadership, therefore giving no grounds for termination, Ablan said.

K. Mark Takai, editor in chief during the Margolis incident, said, "I did fire Grant Crowell for actions I felt unbecoming of a staff person. Till this day, I stand on my action."

"If I were an editor today or tomorrow, I would not hire him. I think he has serious flaws in his judgement."

Crowell said he had no grounds to be fired then, nor does he now. He said he's merely practicing his right to free speech.

"How can you empower people when you control what they can and can't hear before they make up their minds?" Crowell said.

'Coming out' is hard to do

by Vickie Hotema
Ka Leo Associate Copy Editor

This is the first in a series of Ka Leo articles on homosexuality. Today is National Coming Out Day and national coming out events will continue throughout this month.

When Dwaine Coles moved to Honolulu about 10 years ago, the gay community was notorious for "bathroom meetings" at Ala Moana Park and bathhouses. He is thankful his first sexual experience was not like that.

Coles, 31, is indebted to the gay community of the early 1980s and the people who died from AIDS then. "They gave their lives and it is through them that I found out how not to get (AIDS)," he said.

Coles "came out" about 10 years ago when AIDS began to gain worldwide attention and it was labeled a "gay disease." "Coming out is so traumatic and it helps if something happens to make you feel comfortable to come out," he said.

Before Coles left Baltimore to

attend college in Hawaii, his parents supportively asked him if he was gay because of his feminine mannerisms. "I had to tell them, 'I don't know,'" he said. He didn't know until he met a male student at UH-Hilo and "things clicked," Coles said. "We

cause he had never had sex, he said. Girls heavily pursued him, and at times he "got close to having sex, but could not perform," he said.

Coles says he found it traumatic to be a closeted gay when he transferred to UH-

Coming out is so traumatic, and it helps if something happens to make you feel comfortable to come out.

— Dwaine Coles

both had girlfriends at the time but we got along really well and things took off from there."

After a sexual experience, his first, with the young man, Coles knew he could not have a romantic or sexual relationship with women, he said.

Up until that time, he was not sure of his sexual orientation be-

Manoa. He was constantly "sneaking around the dorms," he said.

The gay community has changed much since then, educating themselves about AIDS and precautions. The number of new infections of AIDS in the gay