

add diversity

ANONYMOUS

OPINION: Disrespect for diversity a national and campus problem

In an issue where we've chosen to recognize people on campus that make an impact, we've intentionally kept one group anonymous. We wanted to feature an individual who impacted our campus by adding to diversity through rejecting traditional gender identity and being themselves.

There are many on campus who fit this profile, and make an impact on the life of the school every day, contributing in sports, academics and service organizations, or as friends, co-workers, and peers.

The tragedy here is that we could not, in good conscience, open these individuals up to the harm and ridicule that they might face for simply being themselves by publishing an article about them.

Within this past school year, there have been multiple deaths of transgender teens. A seventeen-year-old student in Kings Mill, Ohio, Leelah Alcorn, committed suicide because of the constant pressure and bullying she faced from others. Our fear is that by featuring a transgender student, we'd further expose them to this type of pressure and bullying. Things like this shouldn't happen, and now that more public light is being brought to this matter, hopefully people will become more informed and incidents will decrease.

Bruce Jenner's recent announcement has made a big impact in public perception of people who identify as transgender. To hear about his life and how he was scared to face judgment for being his true self for 65 years is something that should never be an issue in this day and age.

Even on our own campus, in our own classrooms, we've heard students make ignorant and hurtful statements about those in the transgender community.

More and more people are feeling strong enough to let their true self show, only to be torn down by some-

one who doesn't like what they see or what little they know about it. This can negatively affect a person, their feelings towards others, as well as their feelings towards themselves.

No one should have to experience being bullied for being themselves, and people who don't necessarily agree with what they see or know should just stick to the old general policy of, "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all."

Regardless of how we are raised or what we believe is wrong or right; we shouldn't cast opinions where they aren't helpful. We have no idea what someone has gone through to become comfortable in their own skin, and as decent people, differences should be put aside and the individuals should be respected. Everyone should try their absolute best to become a more accepting person.

So while many wonderful people who add diversity to our campus must remain anonymous now, it's our hope that this fact moves our campus and community to a change in actions.

We encourage you to become more informed on the topic, offer support to those who need it, and, if you have any questions on this topic, to visit <https://community.pflag.org/transgender>.

