What's right?

By

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The premiere issue of the Northeastern Patriot newspaper, or "NEU's Conservative Voice," is an unfortunate case of manic soapbox supremacy and disregard for the rules, summarized in its bullheaded slogan, "When you're right, you're right." The paper needs to adjust its focus and truly seek to engage the campus toward which it markets itself.

Aside from the slogan, the paper neglects to argue issues and merely proclaims superiority, offering no real insight nor common ground to on-the-fence or left-leaning students. If it seeks to truly try to create a functioning dialogue on campus (not merely right vs. left), it must find a way to appeal to students here (who are liberal, more likely than not), rather than just steamroll them. If the paper made a case for its views, it may be able to sway some opinions. But, sadly, it’s their way or the wrong way.

It's true that conservatives on campus have been underrepresented, especially in a city as liberal as Boston. That is why it is imperative that this conservative publication’s voice is strong.

Differing voices are key to a functioning democracy. As a society, we thrive on fresh (and conflicting) opinions. But instead of creating useful dialogue, the Patriot underscores old conservative stereotypes, bashes liberals, estranges its potential new readership and ignores the rules of the very student base it's attempting to reach. While the First Amendment allows the paper to print these views, moving forward with the current approach is just not a smart business plan.

In his Editor's note, editor in chief and NU College Republicans President Dave Moberg promises to "expose you to the real face of college conservatism" and bring students "our message in a powerful and engaging way." A seemingly half-joking disclaimer at the bottom of the page notes, "This publication is printed for a conservative-minded audience and is not recommended for the easily offended, the narrow minded, or the faint of heart" before proclaiming "God Bless America!" Still, rather than achieving these goals offering a forum for the flow of thoughts for the underrepresented conservative students of this campus, the Patriot instead whines about not having a voice in the first place. Well, this is your chance - now use it wisely.

In order to get respect, one must give respect. Funded by the Leadership Institute, a "non-profit, non-partisan, educational organization" that presents itself as "the premier training ground for tomorrow's conservative leaders," the Patriot is turning its back on campus procedures by shunning campus affiliation - beyond the name and distribution areas. In order to have a student media publication distributed on this campus, a group must be represented at Media Board, the conglomerate of The Northeastern News, The Northeastern Times New Roman, NUTV, the Cauldron, WRBB, the Onyx Informer and Spectrum Magazine. However, the Patriot took its own route, seeking outside funding and still attempting to distribute to Northeastern students on campus. As a result, Director of Campus Activities and Programs Brooke Tempesta warned the paper may be stripped of its Northeastern name ties.

If the Patriot hopes to survive and continue to fight the underdog fight, it needs to be led with responsibility and tact. A news organization, even if it operates under a stated bias, must take the time and effort to build credibility with its readers.

In a publication, readers are the focus, and every detail should be crafted with them in mind. Don't just throw opinions at your readers - present them. Argue for them. Bolster them. You just may convince a
few, even in the state Ted Kennedy calls home. But in order to get to this stage, you have to play by the rules.