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Bake sale broaches admission standards

Affirmative action event shut down; probes to see if groups violated policies

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The discount didn't last long for minority students Friday. After making \$31 in 2 1/2 hours, an affirmative action bake sale was shut down by a university administrator when she realized the event was not just a moneymaking endeavor.

The bake sale, advertised as sponsored by the College Republicans and the Objectivist Club, was one of several sales that have been broken up by university administrators at campuses across the country such as Southern Methodist University in Texas and at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Prices reflected the race, religion and ethnicity of students. While white men were charged \$1 for a lemon, vanilla or chocolate cookie, black and Latino men were charged 50 cents.

Women of Asian and Pacific Islander descent were charged \$1.25, apparently, because they represent a fairly large percentage of college populations.

James Gelfand, a Weinberg junior who organized the bake sale at The Rock, said he wanted to protest the U.S. Supreme Court's July decision in Grutter v. Bollinger, which upheld the University of Michigan's use of race and diversity in law school admissions.

"Neither organization is responsible for this -- it's me," he said. "I come from a biracial family and I don't want my siblings to be judged as group members -- I want them to be judged as individuals."

Suellen Johnson, associate director of operations for Norris University Center's administration, said she received a phone call inquiring about the bake sale late Friday morning, after which Johnson went to The Rock and asked the students to take down their posters.

She said it would have been fine to sell only baked goods without propaganda. After Johnson left the sale ended.

Several students approached the tables and debated with club members. Others showed their support for the clubs' stance.

Bri Zika, a Music freshman, was one of a few students to confront the students running the bake sale. Zika said she found some of the posters and slogans offensive.

"Affirmative action has done some pretty important things," Zika said. "It really bothers me that people joke about it, because it's really not funny."

But the bake sale raised larger issues than politics.



College Republicans President Ben Kohlmann said the sale did not have the endorsement of the College Republicans executive board because of the effects it could have on NU's black student community.

"I support the initiative and message, but using our name is not what we intended and not what we wanted to do," said Kohlmann, a Weinberg senior.

Kohlmann said College Republicans and For Members Only recently organized a racial reconciliation initiative, in which members would gather for lunch and discuss political beliefs and interests.

Kohlmann added that he did not want to jeopardize that partnership.

Until Thursday night, Kohlmann wrote in a press release, "no one on the executive board was aware a bake sale was taking place the next morning."

"When we did find out," it continued, "our president made it clear ... that (the College Republicans) as an organization would neither endorse nor condemn the sale."

FMO coordinator Tracy Carson said her organization is holding off on co-sponsored events and questioning the ties between her organization and College Republicans because of trust issues.

"It's absolutely appalling and demonstrates a lack of respect for diversity at Northwestern," Carson said about the bake sale. She added that she will meet with Kohlmann to discuss ramifications.

Erica Williamson, Associated Student Government financial vice president, said the Student Activities Finance Board is investigating College Republicans' participation in the bake sale to see if there is any potential financial misconduct.

Bryan Tolles, who oversees student groups as executive vice president for ASG, said he will meet with Objectivist Club advisers, executives and members Monday to determine if the B-status club violated either ASG or university guidelines.

But Igor Dubinsky, president of the Objectivist Club, said he isn't concerned about any penalization for the club.

"I think we were morally right," said the Weinberg senior. "I don't think we did anything wrong."

"I don't know of any other consequences except a larger awareness on campus about the downside of affirmative action."

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