



Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor may be submitted until noon on Monday before publication.

All letters must include name, telephone number and signature.

The Berkeley Beacon reserves the right to edit all letters for grammar, space, spelling and legal errors.

'I feel fortunate to have this position'

Dear Editor,

I want to respond to the article on PEER that appeared in the November 9 issue of The Berkeley Beacon. Mr. Logan claims that John Mack's reputation is "unsavory." I hope that he does not think that his reputation is one to be savored. This piece is an exercise in journalistic bias.

First of all, work-study funds are being used appropriately. If Mr. Logan had spoken to any of the Emerson students who are earning their grants at PEER (of which I am one), he would have known that. The time I spend at PEER does not involve chasing UFO's or listening to people's alien stories. I have been working at PEER since September, and I have seen John Mack once. No one at PEER has ever tried to sway me or influence my opinion of alien abduction.

As far as PEER's mission statement "grossly understating" Dr. Mack's views, Mr. Logan cites no source for this preposterous and biased remark. Furthermore, Dr. Mack's views have nothing to do with my work-study position. My job consists of reading letters from people who are looking for help coping with an experience they feel they have had. I work with a clinician, who is a senior staff person and I refer these people to therapists. That is the extent of my contact with them. It is PEER's goal to let "experiencers" know that they are not alone and that there are people that they can turn to for help. These experiences are often in a state of great alarm and distress and it is my job to try to alleviate this anxiety as much as possible.

I feel fortunate to have this position. What better community service can there be than helping people who are in a crisis situation? I would much rather earn my grant this way, than sit in some Emerson office answering phones or licking admission recruitment envelopes. Work study is supposed to teach you something. As a writing major, a job that entails my looking at a lot of text and then drafting responses is an ideal situation.

PEER's use of work-study funds is not fraudulent in any way. The author of this piece should seriously examine what the responsibilities of a reporter are. To write a balanced, informative article requires a great deal more than creating scapegoats.

Lauren Smith
Class of 1996

In response, Michael Logan writes:

I am relieved to hear that Lauren Smith feels that work-study funds are being used appropriately—a determination the Department of Education has not yet to made. Currently, the matter is under inquiry.

The **Letters To The Editor** section is intended as a means by which the Emerson College community can respond to articles that have run in The Beacon, or can address issues that they feel are important to discuss. If you wish to take up issue with the author of a previously run letter, you are asked to contact them directly.