

FRANKLY SPEAKING

Olin's unofficial,
student-run news
source.

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FREE, AS IN BEER

A Letter to the Community

rosy

Alumunus Contributor

At the most recent Town Meeting I asked President Miller if he thought there was a contradiction between our talk of teaching students how to have a positive impact on the world and our participation in systems of violence. I specifically brought up our collaboration with military contractors in project work, but also that I think we would find violence in more than just the military-industrial complex if we took a critical look. He did not answer my question, but said that he thought it is a conversation that our community should have. I would like to use this forum to continue that conversation and express some thoughts that I have about values and purpose.

I want to be clear about a few things. I do not intend this article as an attack on any member of the Olin community, either explicitly or implicitly. While I have very conflicted feelings about this institution, and certainly some criticism of individual actions, I feel a lot love for the people who are part of this place and have found my relationships here as both a

student and an instructor to be very meaningful. I also want to be clear that this is not an article about the presence of militarism on campus. I have my own set of values, and I am happy to discuss them, but I am not going to make the argument that my values should be your values, or that they should be our community's values. My argument is that we, as an institution, should decide on and publicly declare meaningful values and act to embody them.

Our "core institutional values" are all self-centered and neither stake out our position nor offer us guidance in our engagement with the world. At a recent meeting a faculty member declared that "Olin's brand is that students build cool stuff." The quote above the library, that "Engineers envision what has never been, and do whatever it takes to make it happen," is apolitical and amoral about both ends and means, accepting any vision of "what has never been" and any tactics used to get there. This is problematic: we could all think of examples of people trying to realize "what has never been" that we would find abhorrent. Why not qualify that statement with

values that speak to how we want the world to be?

I see a few potential reasons for our lack of commitment to values that speak about how to act in the world. The first reason is that it is difficult. Such a commitment would compel us to navigate gray areas, be deeply self-critical, and make hard compromises. It would hold back our "bias towards action" and likely lead us to restraint, a concept that goes against the instincts of engineering and of our culture. A declaration of values would necessitate conversations about whether our institution's actions realize those values, and these are not easy conversations.

Resistance to these difficult conversations can find validation in the assumption that technology is neutral, that engineers create tools and don't have to concern themselves with how those tools get used. Technologies are not neutral. Technologies reflect the goals of their creators, have effects on the world that are not neutrally distributed, and re-arrange power structures in society. We cannot hide behind the idea that technologies are neutral and that their effects,

continued on next page

whether positive or negative, are the sole responsibility of the user.

The second reason lies deeper. It is often implicit, as it is in that quote above the library. It is the assumption that engineering cannot help but make the world a better place. It is a deep faith in technological invention and innovation. This faith is problematic; it is ignorant of the lopsided effects that engineering has, both within humanity and between humanity and the non-human world (see the surveillance state, drone strikes, climate change, etc.). It also displaces the social in favor of the technical, and we ought to consider the possibility that what the world needs is not the stuff of science fiction but of “social fiction.”

There is a third possible reason, and that is that we do not care about figuring out how to leave the world a better place than we found it. From my experiences here, the conversations I’ve had, the wonderful and beautiful work that I’ve seen students, faculty, and staff pursue, I don’t think this is true. I am sure that there are people here that truly don’t care, but I do not see evidence of this as a general truth.

So I am not trying to claim that we are a community of sociopaths. My argument is more along the lines that Olin is institutionally sociopathic. Many members of our community want to figure out how to do good in the world and yet we have an institution that offers little support and is content with

evaluating its success by the starting salaries of its graduates.

I think that if we’re serious about leading a revolution in engineering education, a sense of purpose around why and how we practice engineering is important. And I strongly believe that we should codify that purpose. As practicing engineers, and indeed as some of the most privileged people on the planet (the average Olin starting salary puts one in the top 1% of income earners in the world), we have incredible power. Using that power for good is not easy. I think it is quite difficult to leave things better than we found them when we’re explicitly trying very hard at it, and impossible when we’re not. I am arguing that we should go for it, and we should go for it explicitly.

What do you think? What do you think the purpose of Olin College is, or should be? What would you like to see in the list of core institutional values? My idea of revising these values is just that, an idea. It is a potential first step, with a lot of hard work to follow.

If this is near and dear to you, get organized. Host discussions, draft proposals, try and build a consensus among the student body. Look for faculty support, but understand that the lack of tenure at Olin makes it difficult for faculty to speak critically about the institution. Bring ideas to the administration and to the Board of Trustees, and expect resistance. Recognize that there is a lot of

comfort with the status quo. But also recognize that this is your college and that you have power to transform it.

I also want to point out here that I think the scholarship is fundamentally tied into this (fun fact, the scholarship is the only founding precept that the Board of Trustees has been willing to revise, even before the grossly misguided commitments to capitalism and no tenure for faculty). When I graduated from Olin I had no debt and a lot of freedom to take risks, and I know that this is a freedom that many students do not have. An unequivocal commitment by Olin College to direct engineering education towards bettering the world would demand a commitment to students graduating without debt as well as strong support of students taking risks, both during and after Olin.

Finally, I want to share that I have felt a lot of hesitation around publishing this. For a variety of reasons, I have decided that Olin is not the right place for me and I will be leaving at the end of the semester. It does not feel good to make a statement like this and then bolt, to not be part of the potential hard work ahead. In the end, I decided that public declarations of belief are important to me, even if they contain some hypocrisy. Take it or leave it, as they say.

And take care of yourselves. You all are brilliant, wonderful people. I look forward to seeing the beautiful things that you do.

– rosy

Out of the Ashes

Leon Lam
Contributor

Chapter 4 [WHAT DO YOU FEEL?]

"That's enough."

You step forward, something cold and brittle uncoiling within you. The torturer doesn't look up as you approach, but the courtier raises an arm to bar your way. "My colleague requires space—"

You shove him aside, approaching the torturer's armored bulk. Surprise flashes across the prisoner's expression for the briefest of moments, then hope...

The torturer turns as his comrade shouts a warning, but he is too late. Eyes widen in surprise behind the ornate grille of his faceplate a moment before your punch lands with enough force to dent metal. He stumbles backward, clawing at his head, and you take his legs out from under him with a swiping kick to the knee.

Isidore all but leaps from his sheath as you take him by the handle, parting the Penitent's bonds with ease. You tug at an emaciated arm, and the captive emerges from the coffin like a hapless sea creature wrenched from its shell – naked, pink, and quivering. He clutches you like a drowning man, tears streaming down his cheeks.

"Rest," you say as gently as you can. "I have you, now."

You pivot on your heel and head for the exit, but af-

ter six strides a steel chain leaps from the courtier's sleeve and locks itself around your ankles with a *clink*. Very slowly, you turn on your heel to regard your captor.

"*How dare you,*" he snarls, red-faced and trembling in rage as your enchanted bindings tighten. "Interfering in the administration of Imperial justice, laying a hand on an envoy—"

Deep down inside, something *snaps*.

With some difficulty, you kneel and place the prisoner on the ground. Then you stand up, sheathe Isidore, and take a step toward the courtier.

Tempered steel shrieks in protest for an instant before giving way, shattered links spraying in every direction. The courtier crouches into a fighting stance; the armored torturer gets to his feet, pulling off his ruined helmet and preparing for combat.

"I am about to do *much worse,*" you say softly. Power leaks from the skin of your palms, heating the air till it shimmers – you pull your gloves off, tucking them into your pockets. *No sense burning another pair.*

Everyone starts shouting at the same time. The courtier spits imprecations at you, insulting your lineage and laying curses on your relatives, Lady Jin calls for her guards to stand down, and Adrian attempts to defuse the situation.

"We don't have to do this! Stand down, both of you, and

let's talk this over—" He's clearly concerned about the diplomatic implications, but you are beyond caring.

The yelling fades to a dull throb as you take another step forward. Your opponents make their move – the armored guard lunges at you in a gleaming blur, far faster than an ordinary human; a swarm of gleaming needles leaps from beneath the courtier's robes. They're aiming to kill, years of training backed up by humiliation and righteous outrage.

It doesn't matter.

You step out of the armored torturer's line of attack and grab his wrist, pivoting him to face the incoming barrage of darts. A split-second passes, but you don't hear the ping of metal on metal – Adrian has one hand outstretched, struggling to keep the needles stationary. They quiver in mid-air like a school of fish, and you seize the opportunity with extreme prejudice.

You squeeze down on the torturer's wrist until metal crumples and bone gives way, then hit him on the back of the neck. The unconscious body drops like a sack of bricks, and you cross the distance to the courtier before he can blink.

He chokes and gurgles as you fasten your fingers around his throat and lift him off the ground. Behind you, the needles fall to the ground in a tinkling rain, but you're not done. Power surges through your hand, scorch-

ing hair and searing flesh, and his eyes bulge out in a silent scream.

As the smell of cooking meat fills the air, you lean in close. “The next time you reduce a person to a helpless, mewling wreck whose only hope is the mercy of another... *remember this.*”

Then you drop him.

He hits the ground, moaning in pain. After a moment, he looks up at you, and you see only hate in his eyes. “Mark my words, foreign dog,” he growls. “The Emperor will hear—”

“What in *all the hells,*” Lord Anselm says very quietly, “is going on here?”

~~

You look up. He’s standing three feet from you, still as a statue.

WHAT— when did he get here?

Nobody speaks, and Lord Anselm goes on: “I can see that some sort of...” he makes a show of looking around, “misunderstanding must have occurred. Was it the Penitent?”

The courtier nods, clutching his bleeding neck and glaring at you.

“Ah,” Lord Anselm says. “The Knights are excellent bodyguards, but they tend to follow instructions to the letter. My orders were to protect every living soul under Lady Jin’s roof – it appears they were interpreted somewhat... literally, and you became a threat the moment you harmed the criminal.” He bows his head in supplication, giving no outward

indication of the outright lie he’s just told. “You have my sincere apologies.”

The courtier looks unconvinced. “If what you say is true, rescind the order and allow me to carry out my duty.”

Lord Anselm smiles. “All in good time. I will personally see to it that justice is administered, and will reprimand my subordinate for a lack of discretion. In the meantime, good sir, I suggest you seek medical attention. Honorable Lady, would you be so kind?”

Lady Jin snaps her fingers. Hidden panels in the walls slide open, and six armed guards hurry over to the courtier and his unconscious comrade. The courtier’s face darkens at the prospect of leaving without his prisoner, but he leaves without further fuss.

~~

Once the two injured men are out of sight, you bow your head. “I—”

“Follow me,” Lord Anselm’s voice cracks like a whip, and you close your mouth. “*Both of you.* Leave the Penitent.”

The two of you follow Lord Anselm back to Adrian’s room in the Guest Manor. Once inside, he makes a hand gesture and Adrian extends his Influence, checking for eavesdroppers.

An agonizing ten seconds of silence passes before Adrian shakes his head, and Lord Anselm sighs.

“I didn’t think it’d happen so soon, or I would’ve

warned you in advance,” he says. “You reacted with much less subtlety than I’d hoped, but... I can work with this.”

You frown, and out of the corner of your eye Adrian looks equally confused. “My lord?”

“It was a play for power,” Lord Anselm says. “Doing nothing would have been a sign of weakness. Now, though, the court can claim offence at your flouting of imperial justice and try to squeeze more out of the negotiations. Either way, they stand to gain – and all it took was one poor soul.”

You shake your head. “Such an easy decision to make, given that none of them had to suffer.”

Lord Anselm shrugs. “One wretch for the prosperity of a nation. I may not agree with the imperial court, but I believe their decision was thoroughly weighed.”

“On a broken scale,” Adrian says. There’s an unexpected heat in his voice, and his fists are clenched.

Lord Anselm shrugs again. “Perhaps, perhaps not. Regardless, I do not intend to give them what they seek.” His voice is cold as stone, his gaze hard as flint. “This changes nothing. Make the necessary preparations for tonight.”

~~

Lord Anselm stalks out of the room, muttering something under his breath. Adrian waits until he’s gone, then sinks into a chair. After

a moment, he mutters: “Do you think we did the right thing?”

“Yes”, you reply instantly. Then you think again. “Wait—”

Your colleague makes a hopeless noise. “I know. Torturing someone like that... just thinking about it makes me sick. But—”

You consider the situation for a moment. “Perhaps they’re right?”

Adrian nods. “Perhaps the Imperial Court does dispense true justice, and we are the misguided ones,” he says glumly.

You shrug. “The law is the law, and I broke it.”

“We broke it,” he replies. “Whether or not we were justified...”

“Probably not,” you say. “But I wouldn’t have done anything differently. Would you?”

“I...” He frowns, mulling it over. “I don’t know. I’ll have to give it some more thought.”

“Fair enough,” you say. “Let me know when you find an answer?”

“Of course,” Adrian replies, giving you a faint smile. “You know, I could really do with some wine...”

“Don’t even think about it,” you say, moving for the door. “I’m going to bring the Penitent back.”

Adrian nods. “Best to put him in my room,” he says. “I’ll stitch him up.”

~

You head back to the training room, bandages and a set of Adrian’s spare

clothing tucked under your arm. The Penitent is exactly where you left him – Lady Jin is nowhere to be seen, but maids are busying themselves with cleanup, hurrying around with washcloths and buckets of water. None of them dares approach the figure lying on the wood, motionless except for the shallow rising and falling of his chest.

I half-expected Lady Jin to have restrained him or turned him over to the authorities, you think. She probably wants to see what we’ll do.

The Penitent is still bleeding as you patch him up and dress him. He tries to help, but he’s so weak he can barely move, let alone dress himself. You cradle him in your arms and head upstairs, and he babbles something unintelligible.

“Your pain is over,” you say in Reshanese. “I will *not* let you suffer further.”

~

After depositing the Penitent in Adrian’s room, you head back to your room and begin preparations for the evening’s banquet. A dress coat in Imvarri red goes over your usual ensemble, and you put Elizabeth and Isidore away. The rules were clear – you’re only allowed one weapon.

Walking over to your chest of belongings, you reach past clothing and travel essentials until you find what you’re looking for – your sword. Your crossbow and knife, useful and reli-

able beyond reproach, are named for your predecessors – those who bore your Shard before you.

But your sword has no name. *The blade is an extension of the body, your masters used to say. The body is an extension of the mind. The mind is an extension of the soul.*

You draw your blade silently. Nothing fancy – just four feet of gray steel from crossguard to tip, simple leather bindings around the grip. No decoration besides the mark of your Order on the pommel. No adornment besides your name, carved into the flat of the blade.

The weapon is perfectly balanced, and a flick of your wrist sends it dancing through the air. You long to give it a practice swing, but...

No. You clamp down on the urge. Not here. Not now.

You sheathe your sword and buckle it to your hip, feeling a faint hum of disappointment as you do so. Just then, you hear footsteps, and Lord Anselm walks into the room.

“Forty-Seven,” he says without preamble, “I need you to kill that poor soul. The sooner the better.”

You close your eyes. You knew this order would come, and yet—

“Look,” Lord Anselm says, something like sympathy in his voice. “He’s broken, and no sane doctor or biomancer will dare to fix him. There’s nothing left for him besides a half-life, filled with maidservants and gruel and nightmares...” He trails

off.

You sigh. "He's of no use to us, and helping him further will only antagonize the Reshanese?" The words leave a bitter taste in your mouth.

"I'm glad you understand," Lord Anselm says. "There is nothing else we can do for him, now."

You take in a deep breath.

[WHAT WILL YOU DO?]

[Follow your orders. Kill the Penitent.]

[There might be something you can do... (Write-in)]

Look for the survey that will be sent out soon in an email. Everyone should vote, since the next month is going to be the last *Out of the Ashes* installment for the 2015-2016 academic year!

SERV

Kelly Brennan

Contributor

BARCC Walk for Change:

Peer Advocates and Maire Keene

Olin and Babson are teaming up to register a team for the annual BARCC Walk for Change on Sunday, April 10th. Hop on a bus we'll be organizing on Sunday morning with your friends and come join some 2000 allies who want to end sexual violence one step at a time. If interested, contact Maire Keene at maire@students.olin.edu or go to tinyurl.com/wfc2016 and sign up with coupon code BABSON-WALK under the Babson & Olin College Team. There will be food trucks and lots of free swag! All student registration fees will be covered by SERV.

Peer Advocates:

PAs Rezy and Maire were on a panel representing college student activists at a local high school this last Tuesday. Currently, the PA Application process is in the works. Please fill out the online survey

(goo.gl/forms/72aVgntRI3)

Activity

to give feedback on the applicants! Looking forward, the PAs are organizing an Olin-Babson team for the BARCC Walk for Change on Sunday April 10th (contact @Maire Keene with questions).

Red Cross Blood Drive: Led by Frances Devanbu and Ariana Olson

On Friday April 1st, the Red Cross will be on campus from 11:00am - 5:00pm to collect blood donations! Please sign up at the table in the dining hall to donate!

Cradles to Crayons: SERV Auction

SERV visited the Cradles to Crayons Giving Factory on March 24th! On Saturday, April 2nd from 10am - 2pm, Cradles to Crayons is hosting Needham Gives Back at Needham High School. Volunteers from the Needham community will sort, inspect, and pack donation items, making an impact on the lives of children in need of more support in Massachusetts! If you are interested in volunteering, please see the sign-up sheet (tinyurl.com/NeedhamGivesBack) in the SERV email!

The Daily Table: Service

Update

Activity Leadership by Emily Yeh

Volunteer at Daily Table in Dorchester! Daily Table is a nonprofit organization that sells affordable and healthy foods to people with low incomes. A group from Olin volunteers on Saturdays from 2-4pm. Look in your email to sign up (tinyurl.com/OlinDailyTable) for one or more shifts! If you have any questions, please contact Emily Yeh!

The Food Recovery Network: Led by Mackenzie Frackleton with GROW

The FRN is continuing to recover food from the dining hall. Drivers with cars or who can drive the Olin van are needed to help drive food to the Salvation Army of Framingham (35 Concord Street, Framingham, MA). Please contact Issac Vador if you are interested!

The FRN is also going to discuss FRN leadership for next year. If you are interested, please contact Mackenzie.

If anyone wants to continue the FRN over the summer (they need to commit to donating food every two weeks and, ideally, be doing re-

search at Olin), they should contact Mackenzie.

Freecycle: Led by Linnea with GROW

The GROW freecycle is designed to keep reusable goods out of landfills! Please donate clothing and other reusable items in the WH1 bins that will be available until the end of the semester. Anything that is not of value to you may be of value to someone else! If you see anything that you are interested in, feel free to take things that are of value to you. In the past, all of the

items that are not claimed by the end of the summer have been donated to Goodwill, but GROW is exploring other options such as PlanetAid and are taking input from the community.

Youth CITIES: Andrew Holmes

Andrew has been mentoring for the Youth CITIES March to May Bootcamp every week, helping teach students how to leverage their local resources and define a business idea based around a specific problem they face in their community. Students

are now working on their ventures in class, and Andrew is assigned to specific students to advise and help prepare for the final presentation and competition in front of venture capitalists and entrepreneurs.

Big Brother Big Sister College Campus Program:

Olin and Babson College Max Wei and Justin Kuni-mune had only one outing with their littles this March due to spring break, but will be continuing to meet regularly until the end of the school year.

Honor Code Rewrite

Aditi Joshi

Contributor

Reading the Honor Code can sometimes take hours and it's extremely confusing, but the Honor Board has been working hard this semester to end this. On April 7th, we'll be having a Town Hall meeting where we'll be voting on the following proposed changes:

Honor Code ≠ Honor Board: Do elections procedures come to mind when we say Honor Code? Yep, I thought not. Well, we agree! This amendment removes sections 5, 7-8 from the Honor Code, since these sections deal with the Honor Board as an organization and are better suited in the student government bylaws. This amendment is contingent on the Student Government voting in these sections into the bylaws, so that the Honor Board doesn't get stuck in a lawless limbo (no one would

want that). The Honor Code now only includes our mission, the values, hearing procedures, appeals, and amendment procedures (and is now only 8 pages instead of 20!).

A Re-write: Where we try and make the procedures easier to understand. Featuring: a glossary section! All of the actual content of our procedures stays the same but they are now much easier to understand.

Appeals: This amendment takes what StAR and the Honor Board already follow as the Appeals procedure and actually puts it into the Honor Code. Instead of being buried in the depths of the student handbook, the appeals procedure can now easily be found in the Honor Code itself.

Title IX: This amendment removes the Honor Board's involvement in Title IX cases. Title IX cases would not be filed directly through the Honor Board anymore, but

rather through StAR and/or any relevant outside authorities. We propose this amendment because we do not feel we are sufficiently qualified to hear these cases. Additionally, the expectation from the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Education (the office that oversees Title IX) is that students not have a role in Title IX related cases. We understand that this revision could be very controversial and are happy to answer any questions.

Get ready to vote on all these things (and have mountains of snacks, because who are we kidding, no one comes to things if they don't have snacks) and the next Town Hall Meeting on April 7th at 7pm (that's in a week!). And here's our preemptive apology for the number of all student emails that are going to come your way in the next couple of days. (#sorryno-sorry)

R E A D M E

Jayce Chow
Editor in Chief

Tldr; Frankly Speaking needs a new Editor, sorta.

Long: I (Jayce Chow, Frankly Speaking Editor-in-Chief) am not going to be here next semester (Fall 2016). ‘So what?’ you might ask. Well, for those of you that stumble bleary eyed into the Dining Hall on the first weekday of every month and DELIGHT in seeing editions of Frankly Speaking littering the tables, it means that will no longer be physically possible for me to do. ‘So you want one of us to take over Frankly Speaking?’ Well, no, not entirely. I spent a year learning how things work from my predecessor (Lyra

Silverwolf). I have spent the better part of this academic year tearing my hair out on the given day that I decide to lay out the paper as articles fail to fit, I haven’t yet received final drafts, or people decide to pull their articles. It’s a long, frustrating process that has taken me time to refine. What I am asking for is people to fold and distribute. I can lay out a paper just fine from anywhere in the world. I can’t fly to Boston once a month just to distribute and fold 8.5x11 sheets of paper. ‘But what if I’ve been meaning to get involved with Frankly Speaking and just never got around to it?’ Heaven forbid someone else wants to work on Frankly Speaking. (In reality, I’d love to have you. Email me and

we can talk).

‘How would this work?’ You should email or talk to me. Then I can walk you through the process of printer settings and quantities and how to fold and where to distribute. Then next year, you will get eight emails from me. Four of them will contain the final draft of Frankly Speaking that you need to print and distribute on or before the eve of the first weekday of each month. The other four will have text in them for you to email out to the community, along with a digital copy of each issue.

So there you have it. Hopefully at least one of you will decide to step up to the plate. Don’t let the physical editions of Frankly Speaking die.

**Carnivores
Coffee**

- ★★★★
- 17 Wars
- 8 Continents
- 1 Knife



This coffee was cultivated from seed to roasted bean with a single knife, passed down by the owner’s fore fathers. It has cleaved down men in seventeen wars, and eight continents. We mix ox blood into the soil, for that extra dose of manly toughness. If you’ve never killed a man, this coffee is not for you. And don’t you dare put any cream or raw organic cane sugar into it. Drink it black, like a man, or don’t waste our time.

*Yes, this is a joke. It’s April Fool’s Day. Sue me.

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Or check out the website at

HTTP://FRANKLYSPEAKINGNEWS.COM

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