

OPINIONS

WANTED: Moor Spirit from You and Me

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Copy Editor

If there's anything that should make students proud, it's the school culture. It's what we have built and created by being a part of our school and participating in what our school has to offer.

Wait, why are you snickering? Oh.

Participation. The school lacks participation. But perhaps it is better to define school culture first so we're all on the same page.

According to dictionary.com, culture is defined as "that which is excellent in the arts, manners, letters, scholarly pursuits, etc." Most people don't really think about it, but culture is a huge umbrella. For our school specifically, it covers our sports, clubs, academics, extracurricular activities and even down to our style of dress and where we sit at lunch. It's what we do; it's how we act. And for some reason, according to both teacher and student reports, our school lacks participation and school spirit.

How are we not participating? Our sports teams are full, our clubs are full, and lunch is lively. What is it that makes us disconnected from our school?

Maybe it's the fact that out of 2,800 students, not even half vote for Executive (about 30-800, depending on the season, according to ASB President Amy He). Or on Quad Fridays, few people come to look at the festivities. Or during pep rallies, the only ones riled up is ASB. Even our sports games have little support. The

one year I went to the Homecoming game, there was so much space between people on the bleachers, the audience could have laid across them comfortably to watch the game.

But it's not just mere participation (or the lack thereof) that makes our school culture; it's also how we carry ourselves and relate with one another. Cheating, cussing, hanging out on Main Street, pretending there's a pool on top of C-building also add to

our school make-up.

Our entire culture isn't flawed. It's unique, but not enough of us are participating or even caring about it. We're not as unified as we could be, and since we've talked (and frankly, complained) enough about it, it's time to move on to step two: doing.

So, what are we going to do about it?

There is no easy solution to this. There's no magic pill or spell that will immediately cure us of all our problems and shortcomings, especially since this problem is an accumulation of many factors over a long period of time that finally settled into habit. There's only one real route out of this, and that goes back to the individual: YOU.

Yes, you've heard it all before: each person must do their part for the school. As rebellious, hormonal teenagers, this comes as a real turn-off for most. But if a majority of you are going to complain about it, you can re-channel that energy into participating and loving our school. It doesn't have to be a particularly big investment. Picking up a stray piece of trash that wanders onto your path is enough. Some other tips: voting, going to games, cheering at pep rallies.

Our school is over 100 years old. Some of our students participated in World War II. Some of them suffered in the Great Depression and feared for their safety during the Cold War. Don't let all that history go to waste. They suffered and worked to make our school what it is. Do your part because Alhambra High School is one of a kind.

Be proud. Be loud. Do Moor.



GUEST PERSPECTIVE: Castaneda on Culture

Daniel Castaneda is a junior sharing his opinion on the culture and community at AHS, and how we can improve it.



In light of recent events, it is evident that there needs to be a major change in our school environment. I represent a different group of students, known as the "Students-who-happen-to-be-Latino." It may seem odd that such a species of person exists at Alhambra, but nonetheless we do. We are a portion of our ethnic society in Alhambra and we are often overlooked because of this "achievement gap" between the Latino/Hispanic students and Asian students at this school.

However, intelligence and ambition can't be measured in numbers anymore. There is no more time for being petty and judging one another upon seeing the color of their skin. I have worked too hard establishing myself within this particular society of so-called "under-achievers" only to be written off by someone who has never even met me.

Last year I was involved with this oddly named "radical" group of reformists known as UTOD (United Through Our Diversity). This was not the wisest choice on my behalf, seeing as I was dragged into the highly publicized battle of "Mexicans versus Asians." It was then that I knew something had to be done, so I separated myself from this diverse coalition of students and chose to run again for Executive Director of Finance this past semester.

I was not surprised to see the same thing happen to me, except I was on my own this time. It angered me to hear that I was inexperienced and all around incapable of doing the job, for which I was running, from people who had never seen me before nor made the effort to at least find out who I was. They didn't know that I had been working under the wing of a financial supervisor and branch manager in a little business known as Burke Engineering every Saturday for two years. In other words, I was not new to the financial realm and I was not new to being trusted with money, but since this information wasn't written on my forehead, no one bothered to find out until now.

I have absolutely no problem with my opposing candidate, probably because I have never met him before. Aside from the occasional passing nod and smile and initial introductory handshake, I had no idea who he was and that was fine

with me. What I do have a problem with is random people dismissing my hard work and calling me inadequate without checking my qualifications and educational background.

If you are wondering why there aren't as many Latinos involved in the school, it basically boils down to two reasons. First, there is a sense of hopelessness in the Latino students at this school because of the recurring "race war" that comes up during any hint of involvement in school politics and even clubs. The second reason is that if we were to join and have a role in our school, we will not be seen as students, but as tokens to school diversity. Some are not as thick-skinned as myself and can't take the amount of ridicule and whispers of stupidity and lack of adequacy from other students as I have done, so they choose to do what they do best: Maintain their reserve and sadly drift through the school. Through the overpowering opinions of other students, we have grown to assume that the best we can do outside of our schoolwork is to just let everyone else take the reins; but I can assure you that this will not last very long.

This school needs a new view on interaction, one that truly includes all of its willing students and offers rigor along with comfort. Not everything needs to become a battle between the races. If you want people to be involved and challenge your position in government or even join these great clubs on campus, everyone needs to step aside from this ignorance of ethnicity and judge people on character, not race. We are a community of ideas and the only way we can truly move forward is if we set aside this mentality of everything being a conflict between two populations of students.

I am proud to be a Moor and I refuse to accept the circumstances that we have placed upon ourselves. Let's go from being a school that has the label of a dominantly Asian ASB to a school that has a capable and hardworking body of students from all backgrounds, trying their best to make this campus as enjoyable as it can be. Let's go from looking down on any other ethnicity trying to join a reputable club, and extol the fact that they want to be involved.

And finally, let's throw out our differences and collaborate with one another in order to change Alhambra High for the greater good and future Moors. It is not too late to learn to accept this inevitable change and commend its arrival in order to create a better sense of community at this school. This will definitely not happen overnight, but every journey has to start somewhere.

LILY HAWKINS

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Here's the Mail

How is it that we, the young people, have made a name for ourselves as the inactives? Yes, we've succumbed to simply complaining about how the cold weather hurts our arthritis and how the government doesn't care about our health care instead of getting off of our rockers and doing something about it. In a world where we give up the opportunities to act on what we think is right, nothing is prone to progress—at least not in our hands.

I often hear passionately voiced opinions about the happenings at our school. We all have our complaints. We have opinions on the safety of ingesting school lunch and our anger at the cancellation of Food Fair and the amount of busy work we receive, but we only hear about these things. In the history of progress, being proactive always begins with dissatisfaction, so there really is nothing wrong about complaining. The only problem is that hardly anyone at this school braves the next step, and that is taking the initiative to change what is wrong.

Even if the chances of change are minuscule, doing something is better than doing nothing. Take protests for rights or against budget cuts for example: it's plain to see that these people are upset about something. Though you may argue that they're not actually physically changing anything, they are taking a stand for their cause and making others aware of it. It's the notion that if you feel passionately about a cause, you go ahead and do something about it.

And here's where our newspaper comes in. What people don't seem to understand is that our newspaper represents the student voice. We consider ourselves a forum—a two-way street, if you will. So if you are enraged or impassioned by something at school or in the newspaper, let your voice be heard, rather than simply staying silent. Write us a letter to the editor if you have a different opinion or if you're unhappy with something at our school. The impact of your opinion is potentially great, and our readers would love to hear what you have to say.

