

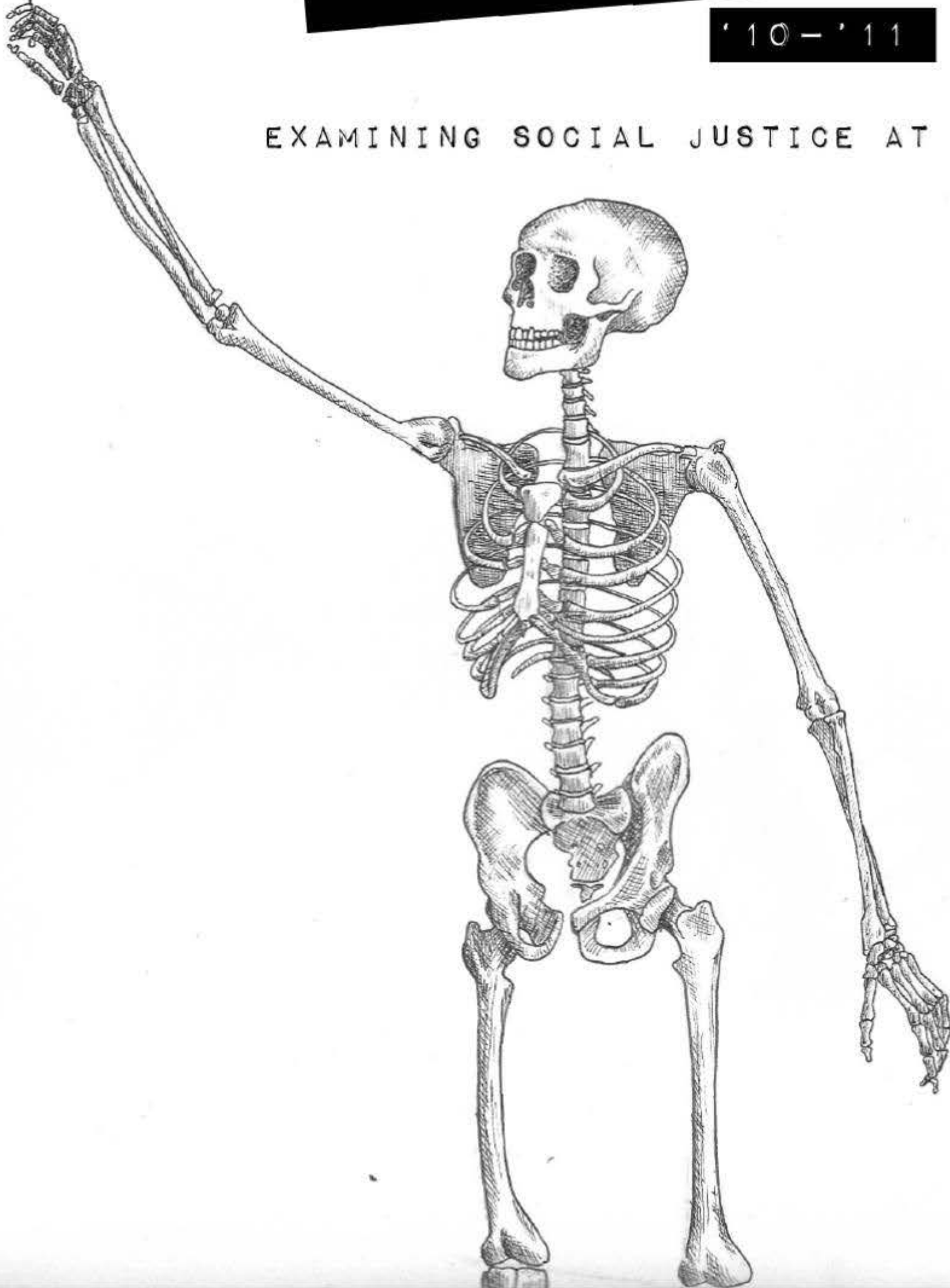


THE

MATRIX

'10-'11

EXAMINING SOCIAL JUSTICE AT PLU



Dear readers,

This year marks a new beginning for The Matrix. It was clear when we applied for this position that The Matrix was in need of a change. The Matrix only published once last year, and the future of the publication looked grim.

That's where we came in. Neither of us wanted to see The Matrix die, since it is a vital piece of the PLU community. The goal of The Matrix isn't just to be a soapbox. The way we see it, the goal of The Matrix is to connect all of the clubs and organizations, all of the students and faculty by offering everyone an opportunity to share what they are passionate about. But why has The Matrix been struggling to receive submissions in the past couple of years? Have the topics not been interesting to students? Have not enough people known about The Matrix? Or do PLU students really not care about social justice? Considering how many clubs and organizations on campus focus on tackling social justice issues, we didn't think the problem could be a lack of care on students' parts. Even so, we thought this would be a good time to examine how PLU students really feel about social justice. For our first issue as co-editors, we decided to shake things up a bit. Instead of following the same themed format as The Matrix has for the majority of its existence, we broadened our scope.

Consider the soul. Or spirit, or consciousness. It's that *je ne sais quoi* about living, about being a human being. Now, couldn't you say that PLU's mission statement is sorta like the soul of the university—the thing that drives us to be students here? If you can think of PLU's literal architecture as a framework (*ahem*, like a skeleton), the arches and walls serve as a protection and support for everything contained within.

In these pages you'll read how some clubs and orgs are working, like organs do, to sustain the body of the university. Hopefully, by the end of the issue you'll begin to see that it is you, member of the PLU community, who connects it all together. We apologize if it's too early in the morning for a metaphor (bear with us, we are both English majors), but we like to think that we are all connected in our quest for social justice both at PLU and in the larger community.

With the flip of the next page, and with all of our issues, we invite you to respond to and engage the content. Let us know how it's working, or how we've got it totally wrong. Heck, send us "I love it/I hate it" email! The Matrix belongs to the entire PLU community and you deserve to talk back to it.

-Christina and Kelsey
matrix@plu.edu

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A note from your RHA Social Justice Director

“PLU seeks to empower students for lives of thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership and care—for other people, for their communities, and for the earth.”

There is not a student on campus that hasn't heard this phrase. The PLU mission statement is what brought many of us to this amazing university! Because this makes up the identity of the school, it only makes sense that anything associated with PLU would likewise be as devoted to empowering “students for lives of thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership and care - for other people, for their communities, and for the earth.”

This stands as a pillar of who this community is, and so the Residence Hall Association (RHA) incorporates it into the purposeful leadership and community building that takes place around campus for the student body. RHA is the umbrella organization that incorporates the Residence Hall Councils (RHC) to better build community through representation, advocacy and awareness. And each executive member of the RHCs has a direct contact with similar positions in RHA, acting to best be a resource

and support each other.

This is the first year that each RHC, found in all traditional campus housing, has a Social Justice Director. This Social Justice Director incorporates aspects of RHC positions from the past. Many of you might remember the former EJD - Environment, Justice and Diversity Director and the SAD - Spiritual Activities Director. In best serving the PLU community, it was determined that sustainability and social justice were two very important aspects of the community, each serving in accordance with the PLU mission statement, and so aspects of these two positions were purposefully separated into the Sustainability Director and Social Justice Director (SJD). The SJD position includes aspects of spirituality, diversity and justice. Anything and everything is incorporated into social justice, and so this position is holistic in nature.

Because issues of social justice have attached to them very personal sentiments, one of the larger challenges to this position is creating a ‘tangible’ sense of action. Each of us has our own passions that we continue to

share with others. Soon we will be hosting a campaign of hearts, with the slogan “Social justice is what pulls at your heart strings. What pulls at yours?” For this, heart cut-outs will be provided to every on-campus student with the purpose of writing what they are passionate about and then returning this to their RHC SJD to create a compilation of passions to show to the greater hall and PLU community. We hope that this will continue to serve as an opportunity for the PLU community to learn about themselves and others.

This year's SJD's:

Foss SJD - David Breithaupt

Harstad SJD - Hannah Acock

Hinderlie SJD - Kate Miller

Hong SJD - Elizabeth Reeves

Ordal SJD - Starre Helm

Pflueger SJD - Nate Karle

Stuen SJD - Amy Campbell

T-Stad SJD - Gabe Farias

RHA SJD - Thomas Siburg

STUDENTS FOR PEACE

Students for Peace is an organization of students committed to exploring various definitions of peace and advocating for those concepts through community involvement, service, awareness projects, and self-inquiry. It is an organization that is deeply involved with events of myriad subjects on campus throughout the academic year as well as expanding opportunities for students to become part of the local off-campus community, the Tacoma community, and the global community as a whole.

Students for Peace is inherently reflective of the mission of Pacific Lutheran University. Just as "PLU seeks to educate students for lives of thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership and care – for other people, for their communities, and for the earth," Students for Peace asks both its members and the entire campus community to:

- Constantly **question** the society in which we live and the things that happen around us,
- Take action and **serve** those that are oppressed systematically by that same society,
- Take part in, and provide **support** to, the activities of other organizations that are working for change, and
- Take the time to **reflect** on

what is important in our lives so that we can actively shape the world.

Peace takes many forms. It can exist as words, as images, and as actions. It can be connected to any aspect of life. It can quickly be taken away. For the founding members of this club, peace meant the absence of war, specifically the war in Iraq. March 20th, the anniversary of the declaration that the United States would be sending its military forces into Iraq, remains a major facet of the identity of Students for Peace. And yet, throughout the years, we have evolved to incorporate different meanings of peace. We have grown to recognize peace not only as an absence of war, but as

access to education, as the fulfillment of basic human rights and needs, as purposeful attempts to understand others and the context from which they come, and as showing support for our fellow human beings.

It is difficult to imagine someone at PLU declaring that they are a student *against* peace. But, in our experience, peace is not always in the forefront of the minds of students—even those who are striving for it. As a group of peace activists, we seek to create opportunities that bring the various aspects of peace into others' daily lives. Taking action is the means to an end of reaching peace. We welcome anyone who is ready to act with us.

Open Doors

The Diversity Center:

Committed to Social Justice and Equity

The PLU Diversity Center brings together people and ideas to celebrate shared human experience while exploring, affirming, and enriching dignity and diversity in our community. The purposes and overall goals of the dCenter are to serve as a catalyst for campus-wide change; to attract and retain students to PLU; to strive to build fair practices and habits at PLU; and to foster cooperation and communication among campus and Tacoma community groups.

There are many different people who contribute to programs created by the Diversity Center and help create a welcome and inviting space for the community. Leaders in the Diversity Center are Rieke Scholars, Diversity Advocates and the Director of the Diversity Center. Rieke Scholars are a selected group of students that are committed to creating awareness about social justice throughout the PLU campus. Diversity Advocates oversee Rieke Scholars and create programs surrounding social justice and multiculturalism such as *Multicultural Night*, *Global Get Down*, *The Privilege Series* and *Tunnel of Oppression*. The Director of the Diversity Center is Angie Hambrick, and her position entails overseeing the daily operation of the Diversity Center, monitoring, supporting, and assessing programs and activities implemented by the Center and assisting with campus programs that support the development of students, and the mission of PLU.

The Diversity Center welcomes all students to spend time in the space, engaging in dialogue and creating friendships with others who are passionate about a variety of social issues on the PLU campus and in greater society.

The Diversity Center is located
on the lower level of the UC.

Just Another Environmental Group?

G.R.E.A.N.'s Presence On-Campus

Written by: Marta Behling (President of G.R.E.A.N.)

You may have seen us selling Take Back the Tap water bottles, either in previous years or this fall. Or maybe you have heard our name mentioned as a club pushing for sustainability on campus. But what really is G.R.E.A.N., and what does G.R.E.A.N. stand for?

An organization similar to G.R.E.A.N., called Dirt People for the Earth, was registered as a student club in 1992. The description was a "student environmental action and education group". Later, in 1998, G.R.E.A.N. was born. It stood for Getting Ready for Environmental Action Now, and the mission statement was "to raise environmental awareness and seek action, education, and political recognition locally, and lead PLU into becoming an environmentally conscious and active community."

An interesting note is that it was started with no offices such as president or vice-president; it was meant to be egalitarian, so all

those interested in taking a leadership role were known as "organizers". It was not until 2002 that the office of President of G.R.E.A.N. came into existence.

G.R.E.A.N. definitely started as an environmental move-

ment club, but what does an environmental movement entail? I recently went to the AASHE (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education) conference in Denver, Colorado. There, a speaker named Julian Agyeman talked about how sometimes we only focus on the environmental part of sustainability, or in other words the "greening" of our lives. However, there is a social aspect in there. He encouraged a focus on the justice part of sustainability as well, because if we treat the environment with respect, we will also be treating humankind with respect.

Take for instance public transit. You can really lower your carbon footprint by taking public transit; private vehicles emit about twice as much CO₂ per passenger in comparison to

"...if we treat the environment with respect, we will also be treating humankind with respect."

public transit vehicles. More CO₂ in the atmosphere contributes to the accelerating global climate change, which is

negatively affecting ecosystems in oceans, forests, prairies, etc. However, the pollution emitting from the tailpipes of automobiles has also been shown to have an impact on human health as well. So in this instance, rid-

ing public transit more often will help create both a healthier environment and healthier people.

Another social issue related to public transit is it gives those citizens who do not have a car (the young, the elderly, the poor, those with medical conditions, etc) the means to be independent in getting to work, going shopping, or whatever they need to do. G.R.E.A.N. supports all of these reasons to ride public transit, which is why we put a display in the UC during the week of October 25-29 to inform students about the ORCA card and how it can make riding public transit much easier (for more information, see

www.orcacard.com). Also, with the controversial Proposition 1 (increase in sales tax to help pay for improved roads and public transit systems) being on the ballot soon in WA, we wanted to provide information to students so that those who are residents of WA could make an informed vote.

All in all, even though G.R.E.A.N. was started as an environmental group, we can still be social justice advocates as well. Education about environmental justice, for both our surrounding environment and our fellow human beings, is what we work towards. Be on the lookout for our initiatives.

Campus REPUBLICANS

PLU Campus Republicans welcomes all individuals from a multitude of political backgrounds! The mission of PLU CR is to form a group of students passionate about political involvement and *service* to the community. CR encourages all forms of political interest and enthusiasm toward *bettering our community and country as a whole*. Through Campus Republicans, students are provided opportunities to gain first hand experience in campaigning and running for office, as well as speaking with State Legislatures and Government officials. We work toward presenting various volunteer opportunities to our members. PLU CR feels strongly about the opportunity to voice public opinion on various issues without the threat of feeling judged or discriminated against in our surroundings. We feel that our meetings are a place of open discussion and exchange where individuals can feel supported in their opinions, and provided with resources to make a difference in the community. Feel free to contact any of the PLU CR Officers for further information!

Michelle Range—President

Devon Alexander—Vice President

Brittne Lunniss—Secretary/Treasurer

Email Secretary Brittne Lunniss at lunnisba@plu.edu for questions regarding meetings and service opportunities!

PACIFIC LUTHERAN DEMOCRATS

**"A man may die, nations may rise
and fall, but an idea lives on."**

John F. Kennedy

Pacific Lutheran University Democrats pledges
itself to support the philosophy of the Democratic
Party and to increase the participation of college
students in Democratic affairs.

To these ends, the PLU Democrats shall strive to
assure that members are better able to:

1. Educate students about the philosophy of the
Democratic Party.
2. Assist in the election of local, state, and national
Democratic candidates.
3. Affect political change on the local, state, and
national levels.
4. Give Back to both the PLU and local Community
by participating in community service activities
5. Educate voters about both of sides of the issues

Meetings Tuesdays at 7:30pm

HARMONY

take a stand.

On Monday, October 11th, Harmony hosted its first ever open mic night. We invited PLU students— both queer and allies— to share their coming out stories. Some of them made us laugh. Some of them made us cry. At least one student was escorted off the stage in a whirlwind of hugs. If we learned one thing that night, it's that everyone has a story to tell.

Harmony is PLU's Queer-Straight Alliance. We're open to all students, regardless of sexual orientation or any other identity status. We exist: "To support, empower, and educate the community" about queer issues. As a social justice organization on campus, Harmony's long-term vision is to create a world in which everyone is granted the same inalienable rights of "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness"-- regardless of sexual orientation or any other difference.

You might think that we mean political issues, like same-sex marriage or the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. True, we have advocated for these issues in the past and we will continue to do so in the future. But that's not our focus at the moment.

Harmony's primary goal, above all else, is to combat homophobia. What is homophobia? Definitions vary. One dictionary defines homophobia as 'an irrational hatred towards and prejudice against non-heterosexual individuals.' A certain comic strip lists it as 'insecurity over one's own heterosexuality.' Point is, homophobia is any action, opinion, or belief that degrades, stereotypes, or oppresses people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transexual, asexual, queer, questioning, intersexed, two-spirited, or anything other than heterosexual.

Homophobia is the belief that to be straight is normal, so everything else must be 'less than' or wrong.

Homophobia comes in a lot of forms. It can be something as simple as saying the words 'no homo' or 'dude, that's so gay' in daily conversation. It can be as seemingly supportive as telling a friend "I like you as a person, but I don't condone the lifestyle you've chosen." Or it can take a more extreme form: Bullying. Harassment. Threats. Assault.

You might wonder why you should care about this. Why worry about queer issues at all? Aren't things getting better for gay people? Besides, isn't PLU a liberal arts college? Why bother bringing these issues up here? 'Either way. It's not my problem.'

Except, with hate crimes and suicides on the rise, queer issues are everyone's problem. To quote our current Secretary of State, "human rights are gay rights and gay rights are human rights." As long as homophobia exists in any way, shape, or form-- be it overt discrimination, bullying, or just those little gay jokes that 'everyone tells'-- problems like hate crimes and suicides are only going to get worse.

We all need to take a stand against injustice. Because as long as even one group of people are considered 'less than' or wrong, nobody will live in a world where "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" are inalienable rights.

Take a stand. What's your story?

Harmony meets Tuesdays at 6 p.m. In the Diversity Center.

A DISNEYLAND in the Desert

The wildest fantasies come true in the world's richest paradise (snow skiing in Dubai??). A student's wonders, "At what cost?"

Part I

By: Josh Hammerling

I twisted my palms into my arid eyes, a consolation for the sleep I'd never get. The cabin lights had been turned off for over ten hours, but I remained awake, day-dreaming of slumber. The classmate to my left had been lulled into a fairytale-sleep by the drone of the plane's engine coupled with Tylenol PM. He drooled blissfully as I sat hunched with a travel guidebook, pouring over the statistics and fantastical descriptions of Dubai under a solitary bulb spotlighting me from above. There were sections that described the city as "a Disneyland in the desert," and others that insisted, "you haven't seen industry until you've seen Dubai; it's capitalism on steroids!" "This city is a testament to the fact that with enough money and governmental gusto, any architectural feat can be achieved." We had read such descriptions of Dubai for the past few months, looking into how their media functions, and generally preparing for our Peace Journalism course that took place that January in 2008. And yet, I remained uncertain as to what exactly to expect.

I leaned back into the stale Lilliputian pillow I was given before take off as images of King Ludwig's Neuschwanstein formed upon the rolling desert dunes of the Arabian Peninsula, cartoon fireworks searing the sapphire sky. Dubai's ruler, Sheik Mohammad, standing there on the man-made palm islands in the foreground of my mental mirage, sweeping his hand out toward the dream-scape and welcoming me to his prosperous metropolis. Just over his shoulder lay the famous Ski Dubai, one of the world's few indoor ski resorts, fused directly to the famous Mall of the Emirates: a sprawling mass of designer shops

connected by a glossy pearl floor and enough gold plating to make King Midas weep. Its halls packed with men in intricately woven dishdashas and shimaghs that billow gracefully alongside their wives in jewel-studded burqas—a tangible manifestation of the East-to-West culture clash. I tried to imagine what their faces would look like, but with a population of over 80% expat workers and less than 20% Emirati citizens, I couldn't fathom a typical face.

The mirage gradually dissolved as I opened my eyes, turning lethargically towards the open window. City lights crested the horizon.

We ambled through the terminal, passing elaborate Emirates Air advertisements and a sort of strange diorama depicting ancient Egypt, Rome, and the other great fallen civilizations of history, the sparkling successor, Dubai, at the end of it all. We got together the last of our luggage and an older man—all smiles—approached us with a practiced enthusiasm that was too much for those of us who had just gotten off a sleepless 16-hour flight from Seattle to Dubai. "Welcome to Dubai!" he exclaimed. "Did everyone find their things?" He took our empty stares as a yes and we were off. The call to prayer echoed through some section of the terminal as we stepped into the balmy night air. My enthusiasm for the situation was overshadowed by my need to find a comfortable bed. After a short ride from the airport we arrived at the Sun and Sands Hotel. We chose roommates in the lobby and after a brief discussion about meeting times for class we were allowed to go to bed. The suitcase made a dull thud as I dropped it into a corner and glanced out the window for a moment, falling

A DISNEYLAND in the Desert, pt. 1

onto my bed, arms spread wide to receive my savior, drifting off to sleep almost immediately.

I awoke to the grinding clank of iron on iron a few stories below the window of my hotel room. Kyle stood holding back the lace curtain, peering downward at a mass of uniformed workers shuffling around a construction site with the resolve of subservient drones, laying heaps of metal pipes and two-by-fours into prearranged patterns. A foreman held an over-sized blue scroll, inspecting the margins as his eyes darted back and forth between the page and the site. The workers scurried to wherever his stabbing finger gesticulated. Kyle shook his head and asked, "Did they ever stop working? I'm pretty sure I saw people down there last night." I blinked blearily at the flashing numbers of my clock, which read 8:30, and shrugged. "I'm sure they have certain people working night shifts, the others working days. You know?" "Yeah..."

Peyman, the short and animat-

ed journalist friend of Professor Rowe's, had organized a last-minute tour of Dubai's Burj Al-Arab hotel. We called over the bus from the night before and made our way to Jumeirah Beach. Peyman's eyes widened as he spoke of the new superstructure being built that, upon completion, would be even bigger than Taipei's 1,670ft financial center skyscraper. Peyman mentioned there was even an underwater hotel in the works. I was beginning to get the feeling that literally everything in Dubai is either the biggest of its kind, the first of its kind, or simply the most extravagant of its kind. It's no wonder so many architects see the booming city as the quintessential space to live out their wildest fantasies of structural design.

As we made our way to Jumeirah, the city layout became clearer. Before our arrival, I was under the

impression that Dubai was a tight cluster, a large group of awe-inspiring skyscrapers crowded together. The reality is a wider spread; however, western tourists and business people tend to stay closer to Jumeirah, which was a relatively short bus ride to the Southwest from our hotel.

Once we arrived at Jumeirah Beach, the drive out to the Burj Al-

"It is evident they were banking on tourism to replace oil as the primary means of income for the city"

Arab only exacerbated the excitement: there was an elongated bridge extending directly to the lobby of the enormous structure, dropping off to water on both sides. A

small group of bellhops stood perched on the curb, hands clasped behind their backs, leaving their spots occasionally to run to and from arriving cars. They accomplished this with a sense of urgency fitting for the world's only 7-star hotel (self-proclaimed). They eyed us as we rolled up to the lobby entrance, but their glances

quickly moved to the next car when they saw our cameras and notepads. As I walked into the lobby a concierge standing in an enormous, golden seashell greeted me. "Welcome to the Burj Al-Arab, how may I help you?" Peyman took over at this point and we were set free in the atrium of that enormous structure. I nearly wrenched my neck gazing up at the 180-meter ceiling and the individual floors stacked carefully upon one another like so many layers of decadent wedding cake. The azure walls and amber-studded railings folded under one another and arched into the triangular hollow of what can only be described as an





enormous sail. A modern-day ark dreamt up and constructed as a protective vessel to keep the royal family of Dubai afloat, above any potential loss in the area of oil production. Contemplating the elaborate edifice as a whole, it is evident they were banking on tourism to replace oil as the primary means of income for the city; this building was a testament to that fact.

We rode one of two escalators bordering a mass of arranged tiles, connected by streams of water surging out at coordinated intervals. Exotic fish stared inquisitively through the aquarium glass as I swiveled my head from the façade of one elegantly designed restaurant to another.

I glanced back at the lobby

world over satellite feed while petting his cat and fingering a sinister monocle. The elevator took us to the uppermost section of the hotel, where there was a bar looking out over the beach from a few hundred meters up. It was an exceptional view, indeed, but not quite the image of a “shiny mega city in the desert” I would have expected. The man-made palm island jutted lifelessly into the water a ways down the coast, a dull mist obscuring our view. There weren’t many visible signs of movement down there. The general hubbub of daily life in a residential area seemed absent. Perhaps we were simply too high up to notice.

Our guide urged us to keep moving through the

entrance where Peyman and the others were standing, hailing the last of us for the tour.

Our guide ushered us into an elevator. At each floor we were greeted by a separate concierge desk keeping tabs on who was coming and going, murmuring into their walkie-talkies from time to time. We were still surrounded by as much, if not more, gold than we had seen on the main floor. I half expected to encounter some super villain sitting behind a desk, issuing an ultimatum to the

bar, so as to not disturb the guests who were relaxing there. When we got back to the hallway, he turned to us, and said, “I will now show you the presidential suite.”

A spiral staircase separated two floors of regal purple carpets, the upper of which wound its way into a master bedroom complete with mirrored ceilings and electric wall shades that opened with the flick of a switch. I glanced at the room service menu, which read “deluxe meal,” including the world’s finest caviar and champagne for the low, low price of a few hundred dollars. When asked about the price of the room, our guide responded ambiguously: “Let’s just say you could buy a pretty nice car for the amount of money one night in the suite would cost you.”

We were escorted to the lobby door thereafter, given a handshake by the guide, and sent on our way. I was reeling slightly from the experience, not sure what to make of it. Simultaneous feelings of awe and unease swept over me. The mere fact that this hotel, as well as a majority of the city, had been constructed within the last ten years was a cause for wonder.

We drove back to the hotel, my head resting against the bus window’s grimy glass, staring up at the countless cranes silhouetted against the afternoon sky. Glancing away from the mass of steel on the horizon, we were cast into a shadow as a sizeable bus made its way along the road; a few heads leaned languidly against the window, a sullied green curtain hanging down to blue worker uniforms. Their marble eyes and sand-worn cheeks conveyed a callous intensity, augmented by the aluminum boxcar of a bus shuttling them northeastward in the direction of Sharjah. I turned to Peyman,

“Who are they?”

“They’re the ones who have been building this city.” ■

PLU Loves Social Justice!

PLU Loves Social Justice?

PLU Loves Social Justice.

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You tell us.

PLU is built around social justice; even our mission statement tells us to strive to be inquiring minds who lead and serve within our community and the world. What about that is not social justice-y? Here at The Matrix we think that sometimes that label, “social justice,”

confuses people. It is a pretty ambiguous term, and different groups of people use it in different ways. In our eyes, social justice is anything that works toward protecting human rights and building equality.

We asked some students the question “What is Social Justice?” knowing that it’s a difficult question to answer. Here are some of the responses we received:

“Social justice is advocating for those who are in challenging circumstances.”

“Social justice is: you should be able to punch someone in the face if they’re being stupid or mean to other people, but if everyone is kind and nice, no one gets punched.”

“It’s kinda like merging on a freeway.”

“I think social justice is everybody having equal opportunity to do what they want, be happy, and express themselves.”

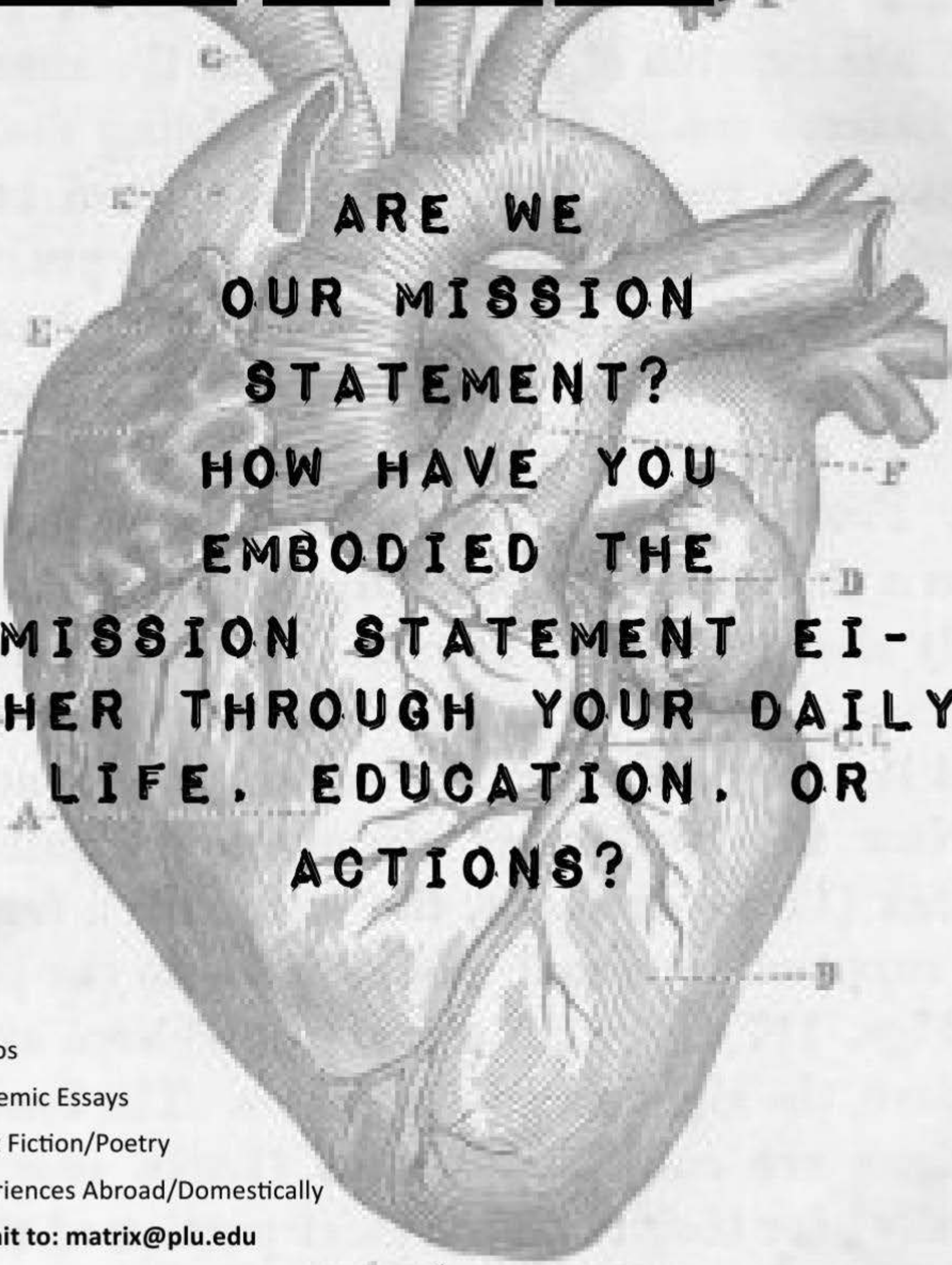
“Freedom to express one’s beliefs without fear of persecution.”

“Balance between two opposing sides.”

SUBMISSIONS NOW BEING

ACCEPTED FOR THE NEXT

MATRIX



**ARE WE
OUR MISSION
STATEMENT?
HOW HAVE YOU
EMBODIED THE
MISSION STATEMENT EI-
THER THROUGH YOUR DAILY
LIFE, EDUCATION, OR
ACTIONS?**

Art

Photos

Academic Essays

Short Fiction/Poetry

Experiences Abroad/Domestically

submit to: matrix@plu.edu

Submission Deadline: **Friday, November 19th**

Fig. 11.1. — The Heart.

PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

AUTUMN 2010