

# FRANKLY SPEAKING

Olin's unofficial,  
student-run news  
source.

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FREE, AS IN BEER

## Friday Service Time: A Lie

Ari Chae  
Contributor

This isn't just another article about Friday Service. This is more than just an attempt to get people involved. This is an article about change and experiments. This is an article about fixing things.

I've spent the last two years on the SERV board, first as a Friday Service coordinator and then as the Chair, and in these two years we've tried various different ways to bring the service culture back to Olin. **The problem is that the community is no longer engaging in service activities, even when SERV offers them.**

When we give tours to outside guests and prospective students, we stop at the top of the wooden waterfall and we talk about what makes Olin unique, and without fail we mention the importance of service to the college and the community. We talk about how we have a dedicated time on Friday afternoons where no one has classes so that everyone can focus on community service.

Well, guess what? We're lying.

This is not to say that

people don't do community service at Olin. In fact, there is a large subset of people who do engage in various activities that give back to the school and to our surrounding towns. But we no longer have a unified culture surrounding service, and we definitely don't have weekly Friday Service activities.

It's been a long time coming. The SERV board puts in a tremendous amount of effort trying to come up with events and activities for Friday Service times, and that effort goes to waste because most of the community is uninterested or unaware despite the board's best efforts. We understand that we may not be offering meaningful activities that people feel will make a real impact. We understand that everyone has a different opinion about what they think is a productive use of their time. We have tried to meet these needs, but the cycle had to start somewhere. At some point, people stopped coming to our events, and with the unreliable turnout we stopped being able to commit to meaningful organizations. As a result, people saw less value in what we were trying to accomplish, and that led more

people to stop doing service. We want to fix this. We want to start making a real difference, and we want to help you do that too.

Clearly, "Friday Service time" is not working. We, as a community, need to rebrand the Friday afternoon time. That's right – I didn't say we needed to fix Friday Service. I said we needed to rethink and repurpose our time on Friday afternoons. This is bigger than just the SERV board. This is Olin as a community.

We are starting a conversation. **Come join us on Build Day – for five minutes, or for an hour.** We want your opinions because this change will affect you. We will be exploring several alternatives to the Friday Service system we have in place now. Just to throw some examples out there, we could start scheduling classes for Friday afternoons. We could re-emphasize the importance of community service and prevent all faculty, staff and students from scheduling anything during the service block (as has been done in the past). We could rename the time to focus on something different, whether that

*continued on next page*

is project time, community time, or something else we have yet to discover. Regardless, we are going to make drastic changes to Friday Service as we know it so that we can stop wasting time and start actually doing meaningful (service) work.

We will be changing something that has been established at Olin for many years, and we will be improving the culture and the

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*"We cannot be afraid to discard things when they stop working."*

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awareness of service around campus. We cannot be afraid to discard things when they stop working, and right now Friday Service is not working. We want to experiment

with new ideas in order to improve Olin's culture around community service and accurately reflect the values of the student body.

Please come join us in the dining hall between 9-11am and 1:30-3:30pm on Build Day, or send us an email at [serv@olin.edu](mailto:serv@olin.edu) if you have any questions or thoughts you'd like to share. Come help fix community service at Olin.

**Share your opinion on Build Day – May 2nd – from 9-11am and 1:30-3:30pm in the dining hall.**

# Building the Olin Memory

Trevor Hooton  
Contributor

The student body at Olin College has the institutional memory of a goldfish. For a college of just over 10 years old, we have forgotten a remarkable amount. Each graduating senior takes their knowledge and experience, and leaves behind a person-shaped hole in Olin's collective memory. Club leaders take with them memories of successful past events. Project managers abscond with a litany of common pitfalls, and how to avoid them. Champions of a cause leave nothing but archeological evidence of their efforts, to be pieced together by their inheritors in years to come.

We lose track of club materials from year to year. Every successive student government struggles to interpret the last year's constitution. Successive generations of Oliners have reinvented the

proverbial wheel time and time again. If you're curious, delve into some of the older folders on public (there's one benefit to not cleaning out old files) or ask an alum about some of the things they used to do. The challenges we overcome and the successes we achieve are often celebrated and promptly forgotten.

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*"Successive generations of Oliners have reinvented the proverbial wheel time and again."*

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But it doesn't have to be that way! Take a moment before the end of the year to reflect on your career at Olin so far. What did you try that worked very well? What failed unexpectedly? How did you recover? What

do you wish you could have done with your group, but never had time for? What do you wish someone had told you, before you picked up the mantle? Write all this down.

I very nearly suggested that somebody take up the challenge to develop a system that allows us to capture the student narrative at Olin, but of course there are a dozen such projects in place already that I just don't remember. Forget a systematic solution for now. Keep your legacy personal.

Very specifically, if you are the current leader of a student group, give your successor a transition manual. Think about what you can tell your successor that will help them next year. Don't leave them to struggle through the same problems you have! When you leave Olin, be generous: don't take all your accumulated knowledge with you.

# Repairing Disillusionment

Jenny Vaccaro  
Contributor

Since committing here last May, my home friends have endured my ceaseless gushing over Olin. I get my own bathroom. The cafeteria has this delicious Indian food all the time. I can major in Materials Science. There are no grades, nor unhealthy competition. Did I mention how all 340 students are besties, have complementary personalities to mine, and yet the community is super diverse? The curriculum teaches every engineering innovation imaginable. Group projects are a breeze, since everyone is extremely motivated. The campus is super safe; there has never been a sexual assault. And when it's all over, we decide among options such as Microsoft, Google, and a Stanford PhD program, because the world values Olin graduates above all others.

Doesn't that sound so nice?

No, the purpose of this article is not to brag about our school - it's mostly about disillusionment. Though I often toe the line between optimism and gross exaggeration, I truly believed all of those things about Olin. I'm now forced to face reality.

I read the articles "It Happens Here," and "It Still Happens Here" published in Frankly Speaking. I hounded a team member to show up. I grew bored with pizza. I noticed the holes in the Materi-

als Science major curriculum and in the math program. The school shrunk so quickly! A tough homework assignment brought out my first round of tears. Being scared at a party brought out the second.

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*"I feel entitled to freedom from the problems – disrespect, violence, and a limited menu – which the rest of the world faces"*

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Mean words from a classmate brought out the third. Since then, I've lost count.

Call me naïve, but I feel entitled to freedom from the problems – disrespect, violence, and a limited menu – which the rest of the world faces. I resent the college for falling short of the utopia I wish it was.

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*"As a community, I believe that we should fight for what we wanted when we came here."*

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Don't get me wrong - I love Olin. I've grown to enjoy things I never expected to, like programming. (I used to think it was all in binary... big disappointment.)

My friends are super reliable and interesting. I get to spend more time singing than ever before. I'm becoming somebody who makes the people I love proud. But we can do better.

As a community, I believe that we should fight for what we wanted when we came here. I can handle disillusionment with the dining hall food, or just how small 340 people can be. I can even accept that as a student body, we have minimal diversity. But I definitely cannot feel fully content with Olin while there are students who feel disrespected and unsafe. That one's on us. We do not have the luxury of removing ourselves emotionally when the upsetting things that happen here surface.

I wish I was at a school that never experienced sexual assault, or difficult group members, or fear. Maybe the current situation is for the best, because a perfect school wouldn't prepare us for the real world. But I believe that if we settle for less now, we won't have strong enough spines to change the world after we leave the bubble.

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*To read the referenced past Frankly Speaking articles (or any others), visit our website [franklyspeaking-news.com](http://franklyspeaking-news.com).*

**Want to share your opinion?**  
Submit a letter or response to any of the Frankly Speaking staff.

# Racial Challenges of Olin

Matt Huang  
Alumnus Contributor

Dear Olin community,

I'm writing you to express my concern with the way Olin's culture addresses race. In the two years since graduating in the class of 2012, I've been living and working in New York City. I have also spent a lot of time reflecting on my college experience, including the role that race played on the Olin campus. To avoid being verbose, I've summarized my concerns in the following three key points.

**1. As a Chinese-American student, I felt like I had to tone down my "Asianness" in order to fit in and be successful at Olin.** Since its inception, Olin's student body, administration, staff and faculty have always been predominantly white. Although I never experienced any overt racism against me on campus, I believe that Olin's "white" culture made it difficult for me to fully embrace and express my lived experience as an Asian-American student. Olin's curriculum emphasizes empathy for others, but for whatever reason, I found that many Oliners seemed to completely overlook the fact that I was Asian. It wasn't until I moved to New York City that I began to truly understand and embrace my identity.

**2. Olin's student body lacks racial diversity.** A glance at olin.edu's "Con-

sumer Information" section identifies how (in fall 2013) "30% [of Olin students] were non-Caucasian". Although I couldn't find a more specific breakdown, I am certain that most of this 30% is Asian. This leaves an embarrassingly low number of students from other races on campus. Unlike most American colleges or universities, Olin seems reticent to openly disclose the racial diversity of its student body. This stands in stark contrast to the focus and pride we place in our gender balance. Prospective students are made to understand that Olin is great place for women, but is it really also a great place for students of color?

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*"Ignoring an individual's racial identity is not being sensitive to 'diversity issues.'"*

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**3. Olin's administration has a troubling approach to race.** As a student, I never felt comfortable having an open discussion on race with the administration. This was partly because I didn't want to be perceived as an angry Asian student, but also because the limited interactions I had with the administration left me with the clear impression that race was not a topic open for discussion.

One troublesome interaction I had as a student was during a lunch meeting for an organization I was involved in. During the meeting, I mentioned another student's name and appended it with her race as a way to dispel confusion over who I was referring to (there were multiple students with her name). The administrator in attendance immediately chided, "There are enough diversity issues as is on campus. You shouldn't be referring to other people by their race."

I was taken aback. As an Asian-American student, I would have no problem if another student clarified which Matt they were referring to by calling me "the Asian one."

I believe a major issue the administration needs to address is this kind of purposeful color-blindness that I experienced as a student. Ignoring an individual's racial identity is not being sensitive to "diversity issues." Rather, it undervalues the role that race plays in the lives of students of color as a nod to being sensitive. When a dominant group—in this case, white people—make an effort to avoid conversation about anything related to cultural/racial differences, it makes it extremely difficult for people of color to share and talk about the things that matter to them.

Another uncomfortable interaction was during my first-year orientation, when the Office of Student Life

brought in a professional diversity consultant to teach my class about diversity. While I personally found this training useful, insofar as it gave me a framework to understand the role that race has played in my own life, many of my classmates felt uncomfortable and singled out due to the trainer's forceful approach to having students of color speak about their experiences with race.

While this consultant was thankfully never invited back to Olin again, the experience left my class with a sour taste-both to how out of touch the administration was as well as how emotionally overwhelming racial differences could be. Perhaps, as a result, we spent the next four years willfully overlooking each others differences rather than making the effort to em-

brace them.

I will be the first to admit that I don't know the solutions to the issues I've raised above. After all, Olin is not the only school struggling with racial issues-on the contrary, race nowadays seems to be a regular topic in higher education news, but due to its small size, unconventional culture and limited resources, our school can't merely adopt practices that have been instituted at other schools.

Instead, I believe change can only happen if we look inwards and start to examine and embrace the values that make Olin a unique institution. We need to foster a campus environment where conversations on race don't happen only behind closed doors. Until we can start talking about race in the dining

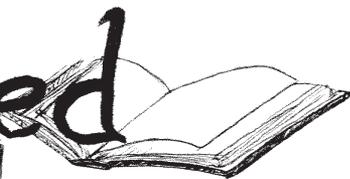
hall, I question our ability to address any real challenges.

If you're still reading this, thank you. I've often questioned whether to write about my experience, but one of the good things about living in the real world (and getting older) is you start to realize what's truly important to you, while worrying less and less what others think of you.

Regardless whether you are white or a person of color, I urge you to share your experiences with the broader Olin community. As an alum, I'm interested in hearing how things on campus may or may not be different from what I experienced. And if you'd like to have a conversation with someone who will really listen, please don't hesitate to reach out: [matthew.huang@alumni.olin.edu](mailto:matthew.huang@alumni.olin.edu).

## The Olin Library

# Uncovered



## Experience Experiments with JoVE!

Say what?! JoVE or the Journal of Visualized Experience is, in my opinion, one of the coolest electronic databases we have on campus. It is the world's first peer reviewed scientific video journal. Yes, VIDEO JOURNAL! And yes, peer reviewed, which means that the content is a trustworthy source of information.

You know that expres-

sion "learning by doing?" Well, this is as close as you can get using one of our electronic resources. Watch an experiment actually take place instead of just reading some heavy text based article. This format also makes it easier to reproduce work for your own research and learning.

The collection includes over two thousand

video demonstrations and experiments with more than fifty added each month. Topics include studies in bioengineering, applied physics and more!

JoVE can be found on the library webpage ([library.olin.edu](http://library.olin.edu)) in the e-resources list. Watch and learn!

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Kelly McDaniel  
Digital Services Librarian

# Improving Our Workspaces

Nagy Hakim  
Contributor

In a recent article published by *Business Insider*, Olin College was ranked 6th for “Best College Campus in the United States.” Notably, the article mentions how easy it is to get around and how great the residence halls are. However, in classic Olin spirit, there is always room for iteration and improvement. Professor Aaron Hoover is hosting a co-curricular (in which I’m participating) this semester called “Designing Workspaces for Creative Collaboration.” In this co-curricular, students identify under-utilized spaces or areas that can be improved and propose a plan to use them more effectively. The purpose of this article is to inform the student body about this co-curricular’s vision, activities, and how we hope to improve various spaces around Olin including the hallway outside the machine shop, the POE room, and the Mechanical Stockroom.

## Outside the Machine Shop

The area outside the machine shop and underneath the stairs has been in consistent disarray all semester due to the lack of work space, storage, and general organization. A group of students has been leading an effort to design and build workbenches that will be placed in the hallway to allow students to work on projects in

an organized and ergonomic fashion. These tables will be entirely mobile, allowing the space to be changed when the occasion arises (such as during the design challenge for Candidates Weekend). The tables will have a folding surface and in the future will likely be outfitted with dedicated tools and task lighting. Students will be able to work in this space, and leave their projects on the table for short term use. The system for managing the workbenches is still being prototyped, but the final version will be communicated with simple signs. Planned modular, mobile storage will also help avoid clutter in the hallway area. These installations will allow the entire student body to more effectively use the space outside the shop and will ensure a safer and cleaner work area.

## Principles of Engineering Classroom

Imagine a room where professor and alumnus Gui Cavalcanti’s personal army of “Stompy” hexapod robots has trudged through destroying everything in its path. Tools, lasercut plywood, and other project materials are strewn across the floor covering every square inch of space available. This is the POE room by the end of every year. A few students have started investigating ways to avoid this clutter by implementing proper storage inside and outside the classroom (where students

inevitably end up migrating their projects). They have also worked on modifying the tables in the room. Each team’s workspace consists of four smaller benches pushed together in a square, but the built-in power strips at the back of every table do not allow students to easily place large projects on the tables. The current situation will be remedied with modified tables and more integrated work surfaces. During Build Day this year, students will also be driving an effort to clean up and disassemble all the left over projects from previous POE classes. The freshly created free space will be used to store next years projects.

## Mechanical Stockroom

The Mechanical Stockroom (AC129) was originally designed to provide a supply of hardware and other mechanical components at any time to any student, given that the hardware would be returned to the space once they were done with it. Efforts have previously been made to keep the room well stocked, but those efforts were not sustained. The room is currently disorganized, and many useless items are taking up space. The hardware that was originally well-stocked is now currently nonexistent. Students find consumable hardware (nuts, bolts, washers, etc.) most useful to them, but those have disappeared due to lack of consistent mainte-

nance. The disorganization of the space also prevents students from finding the things they need. To solve the issues above, we hope to develop a sustainable system that can keep the ME Stockroom organized consistently for a longer period of time. The system will hopefully eliminate any gaps caused by students graduating. Our

goal is to turn the stockroom into a room that has a much greater variety of components that can benefit many more students. Currently, the most useful aspect of the stockroom is making hardware available. We hope to expand the inventory, in addition to providing documentation for each part. One possible improvement we

are considering would be the ability to purchase stock from this inventory.

If you are interested in getting involved with renovating any of these spaces, or have any feedback regarding the spaces listed above, please contact Professor Aaron Hoover by email to [aaron.hoover@olin.edu](mailto:aaron.hoover@olin.edu).

# Honor Board MadLibs

Cases before the Honor Board are wide and varied. Topics range from personal differences and academic dishonesty to misuse of public materials. Above all, the Honor Board is a means for Olin Community members to work out their differences safely and confidentially. Find a friend and fill out the MadLibs in the paragraphs below to learn about a past case.

\_\_\_\_\_ (name 1), a student, was reported to the Honor Board for operating a/n \_\_\_\_\_ (adjective) Wireless Access Point (WAP) that interfered with the campus-wide wireless network and was \_\_\_\_\_ (adjective) by the campus Information Technology (IT) staff. The report was filed by \_\_\_\_\_ (name 2), a student, who had been \_\_\_\_\_ (verb ending in -ed) by the WAP. The Investigative Team determined that enough

evidence was present to warrant a \_\_\_\_\_ (noun) before the Honor Board.

\_\_\_\_\_ (name 1) was charged with violating the Code's Respect for Others clause when he failed to \_\_\_\_\_ (verb) respect for the \_\_\_\_\_ (organization) both when he operated an unauthorized wireless access point despite \_\_\_\_\_ (number) clear requests from IT not to do so and when, despite having set up his WAP due to \_\_\_\_\_ (plural noun) in the College's wireless network, he failed to honor IT's request that students contact them with \_\_\_\_\_ (plural noun) or \_\_\_\_\_ (plural noun) related to the campus wireless network.

The Panel then handed \_\_\_\_\_ (name 1) a copy of an e-mail sent to all \_\_\_\_\_ (nouns) by IT, and pointed out a line reading: "For those students that have \_\_\_\_\_ (plural nouns), I would urge you to remove those from the network, as they will have

a/n \_\_\_\_\_ (adjective) impact on the network." The Panel asked \_\_\_\_\_ (name 1) if he had read this e-mail prior to the hearing and to \_\_\_\_\_ (verb ending in -ing) his WAP. He responded that he had.

The Panel found \_\_\_\_\_ (name 1) \_\_\_\_\_ (adjective). They recommended as a sanction that he write a/n \_\_\_\_\_ (noun) of apology to appropriate members of the IT staff, and for his \_\_\_\_\_ (adjective) violations of the Honor Code, recommended that he be placed on Residence Probation. \_\_\_\_\_ (name 1) requested that an abstract be published as \_\_\_\_\_ (adjective) as possible.

This is loosely based on an Honor Board case from Fall 2003 about setting up Wireless Access Points on campus. You can read the original case at [honorboard.olin.edu](http://honorboard.olin.edu), under "Abstracts."

# Make Change! Build Olin!

Graham Hooton  
Contributor

Olin, this article is your call to action. This article is your mandate to do something. To make a difference. To have an impact! It's up to you to take personal responsibility to better your environment, and I invite you to start right away. Tomorrow is Build Day, when Faculty, Students, Staff, and Alumni are invited to celebrate the Olin Community together. It will be a great chance for you to put your change-making abilities to the test!

I challenge you to make the most of this opportunity. Learn about the projects in advance, and make an effort to engage with every one that interests you. Use the schedule below to plan out your time. Consider the two overarching values that led to Build Day: that our community is worth investing in and that each and every one of us can create something beneficial if we decide to. Take the initiative, and introduce yourself to a member of the community you haven't met yet - Faculty, Student, Staff, or Alum! Support the Project Champions who have invested time and energy into creating an experience for you - one that will also benefit the college. And then, think about this: you, too, can be a part of creating the next Build Day. You can identify a worthwhile project, propose it to the Build Day Architects, and work with them

to make it a reality. You can even help run the show next year! Speaking from experience, it's a vastly rewarding endeavor. You don't even have to wait for next year's Build Day - Oliners who care are turning their visions into reality all the time. At Olin, you can do this and more, if you want to. I know you have ideas.

We are all successful when we work with others, learn from each other, and give back to one another. I know that it's not always easy to act, but still, I implore you to! Try something. Experiment! If you do it 'right,' your experiments may take on a life of their own! Getting started is the hard part.

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*"Find problems  
that you care  
about."*

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So how do you transform your ideas into reality? The first step is to talk with as many people as you can. Find out who has tried them before, who would care about them now, and who would be affected by their implementation. These are your stakeholders. Explain your vision to them. Justify your idea, and let them help you come up with solutions. Anticipate a way for your project to gracefully and cleanly fail. One way to do this is to frame it as an experiment. Another way is to make it impermanent. For instance, Sanjoy's sticky-

note wall of approximation has lasted years. It succeeds in its goal of demonstrating student work, but it can be replaced quickly and easily if necessary.

Here's an example of the process in action: years ago, a Fundamentals of Business and Entrepreneurship (FBE) team planned an art exhibit in the dining hall. They got community approval of the artwork, asked facilities to okay the installation, and then gave it over to the people in charge of the space. Because they took strides to lay the groundwork for their piece, we are able to enjoy the giant painting above the clocks to this day. On the other hand, last year, a group of students invented #livephoenix - a screen affixed to a bar in the dining hall that automatically displayed the tweets of Oliners. Despite being a perfectly compelling creation, #livephoenix soon ended up dismantled, outside the Mail Room. The project was cleared away because its creators hadn't communicated properly with the people responsible for the space. So, just before a high-profile campus event, facilities had no way to know who to contact, and choice but to remove it themselves. I still think about that project occasionally; about how easily it could have been rebuilt, and how it might have been reinstalled in a more sensible way, so that we might still be using it now. The key message? Get feedback.

Once you're done getting feedback, don't then wait around for authorization! We construct this imagined decision-maker in our minds who passively judges our proposals until they magically crystallize to perfection. Someone who then steps in and grants us her permission to act. But there is no ultimate stamp of approval. In reality, if you reach out to all of the relevant parties (and all of the people they suggest you contact as well), and you satisfy their doubts and imple-

ment their requests, there's no one else to go to.

In a community as small as Olin's, we frequently find problems without point-people. The bland Milas Hall Mezzanine was one, until Steve Brand went through the process I've just described, and arranged for an installation of student-built vehicles to live there over the summer. The aforementioned FBE team brought art to our common space. #live-phoenix tried to address issues in communication. Nobody asked these people to

solve these problems, but everyone benefited from their work. As Oliners, we face a unique blend of challenges (due to our size) and opportunity (due to our newness). I challenge you to pick a problem that you care about. And I urge you to try to fix it! Remember this: You, the person who cares enough about an issue to propose a solution to it, are as valid an authority to make it happen as anybody could be. Check in with the stakeholders, and get them to help you. Then, do something.



## Participate in These Projects Before Lunch

	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30	12:00
<b>Woodshop</b>	Light Garden						
<b>The O</b>	Group Trail Run						
<b>Flag Poles</b>	Main Table						
<b>DH Kitchen</b>				Cake Baking			
<b>Mezzanine</b>	Candid Conversation				Candid Conversation		
<b>DH 'agora'</b>	Postcards to Alumni						
<b>DH 'agora'</b>	Music in the Dining Hall				Old Project Collection		
<b>DH 'agora'</b>	Olin History						
<b>DH 'agora'</b>			oQuotes				
<b>DH 'agora'</b>			Curriculum Innovation				
<b>DH 'agora'</b>	Meet Olin: Blurp editing			Hands on Learning			
<b>DH 'agora'</b>	Friday Service Ideation						
<b>Computer Lab</b>	AC Side Stairway Artwork						
<b>Auditorium</b>	Public Speaking (30 min sessions)						
<b>Great Lawn</b>	Tee Shirt Screen Printing						
<b>WH kitchen</b>	Cooking with Facu/Staff				Cooking w/ FacuStaff		
<b>B/w the Dorms</b>	Light Garden						
<b>EH kitchen</b>	Cooking w/ FacuStaff				Cooking w/ FacuStaff		
<b>Behind EH</b>	BOW Shuttle Stop						
<b>Parcel B</b>	Parcel B clean-up (meet on the hour by the flags)						

	1:30	2:00	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	
<b>Machine Shop</b>	Easy Welding and Machining						
<b>AC3</b>	Old Project Scavenging						
<b>AC Stairs</b>			AC Side Stairway Artwork				
<b>Flag Poles</b>	Main Table						
<b>Crescent Room</b>			Curriculum Innovation				
<b>DH 'agora'</b>	Postcards to Alumni						
<b>DH 'agora'</b>	Candid Conversation				Candid Conversation		
<b>DH 'agora'</b>			Candid Conversation				
<b>DH 'agora'</b>	Origami						
<b>DH 'agora'</b>	Friday Service Framing						
<b>DH 'agora'</b>				Meet Olin: Frame-making			
<b>MH Lobby</b>	oQuotes						
<b>Computer Lab</b>	Computer Lab Network			AC Side Stairway Artwork			
<b>Great Lawn</b>	Tee Shirt Screen Printing						
<b>WH Lounge</b>	WH Lounge Redesign						
<b>WH kitchen</b>	Cooking w/ FacuStaff			Cooking w/ FacuStaff			
<b>B/w the Dorms</b>	Light Garden						
<b>B/w the Dorms</b>	Frisbee Golf: Tee Times every 15 mins						
<b>EH kitchen</b>	Cooking w/ FacuStaff			Cooking w/ FacuStaff			
<b>Parcel B</b>	Beekeeping						
<b>Olin "T" Swamp</b>	Blueberry Bush Planting						



## Participate in These Projects After Lunch

\*The DH "agora" is the main area of the dining hall

# FRANKLY funnies

## Franzly Speaking, Issue 1

This is a brand new publication in which we discuss real issues, with one real person, to get you real answers.

FRANZLY SPEAKING: What are your plans for the future?

FRANZ SCHNEIDER: Blue LEDs. FS: Blue LEDs?

FS.: Yeah, blue LEDs. I'm serious. If you want to make

anything look futuristic spacey, all you have to do is add blue LEDs onto it. Blue LEDs are the future.

FS: Huh, okay. What would you say is your greatest weakness?

FS.: Hmm, I might have to think about that one... At the moment, being unable to deal well with changes

to the plan that I had.

FS: Cryptic. What are your opinions on Mafia?

FS.: I think it's interesting, but I don't play it. I enjoy watching it, it's amusing. But I don't play it.

Tune in next issue, where we tackle even more of the important issues!

## Review: Forrest Newsletter

Borrest Fourke  
Contributor

Early this month, I was in the dining hall and I was both surprised and pleased to find a publication called the "Forrest Newsletter" on my dining table. After poring through the well-written and informative newsletter, I was happy to know Olin students have access to publications such as these. Without high-quality, high-impact journalism such as that found in the Forrest Newsletter, I fear Olin will succumb to inferior sources of Forrest-related

news and information. I'm glad the hard-hitting and informative articles found in the newsletter are available to the Olin community on a monthly basis. In fact, I wouldn't say it is a stretch to compare the publishers of the Newsletter to Johannes Gutenberg, at least in terms of revolutionizing the dissemination of important information.

Though the invention of the Forrest Newsletter was fairly recent, it is a struggle to describe its revolutionary effect in words that haven't already been used to describe

the Internet or the steam locomotive. You may be surprised to learn that the newsletter is not, in fact, designed by Sir Jonathan Ive, Senior Vice President and industrial design specialist at Apple Inc, because of it's stunning layout design. However, I can now sleep well at night knowing that this publication exists. The Forrest Newsletter easily deserves all of the glowing praise it has received – I would wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone looking to read an archetype of high-impact journalistic writing.

HAVE SOME FUNNY FOR THESE PAGES?

SUBMIT COMICS

# Selling Community Service

Maddy Fort  
Contributor

Twenty hour car rides allow for a wide range of conversations. It was during the moments when I wasn't napping or being told in grueling detail about how much better Southern fast food is that I heard something remarkably disheartening. From someone I believe to be a person who cares about the community and helping others, I was told that if a person wanted to make a difference they wouldn't go through SERV.

Isn't that what SERV is supposed to do? The acronym of the organization is to support, encourage, and recognize volunteerism. Aspiring volunteers should find an open board which can give aid and support to these community well-wishers. When I mention that I'm doing an educational project with SERV, I earn a snort of derision from many people. When I was searching for people to run for the board, I received an uncomfortable silence and awkward excuses for why they absolutely could not do SERV. Shouting at people during lunches often results in people coming up to chat but avoiding signing up for events. The question I am left with is, where did it all break down?

I am told that only a few short years ago, SERV was a major organization with a large percentage of student involvement. Now, the board feels lucky if anyone other

than a board member attends events. The board members changed the layout of many service events in an attempt to entice the student body to go to many of our events.

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*"I was told  
that if a person  
wanted to make  
a difference  
they wouldn't go  
through SERV."*

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Why is it necessary to cajole our student body into helping others? I remember well on my tour of Olin, as a visiting high school junior, that my tour guide stressed how much community service meant to Oliners. We are supposed to have a go get em' nature, passionate builders of our community. Even after we leave Olin, these qualities are a part of the plethora of ideals that our institution is attempting to nurture.

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*"SERV recognizes that there is a problem."*

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Perhaps I am a little too harsh. I went to a high school where we had required service hours as part of our graduation. Every Thursday classes were shortened and at 1:30 school let out so that we all went off into the world taking our name and goodwill into the commu-

nity. This spirit was a central part of who I defined myself as in my adolescence. As a first-year, I walked onto this campus believing that mindset existed here as well. Friday service time here, which I had believed similar to my previous years of Thursday service, has so far been a let-down.

I sincerely hope that the reasons for people not becoming involved in SERV projects this year is due to either the fact that people are involved in other community service organizations like eDisco or Relay, or that people do not believe SERV to be an able organization. The alternative is just too depressing to ponder.

So we get back around to it, where is there a break? Is the current scale of SERV's projects the problem? Do you believe that another organization does a better job? Or do you believe that community service is not an integral part of your college education? SERV recognizes that there is a problem. As an individual who feels strongly about community service, I hope the rift can close so that all of us may have the opportunity to do service.

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*Join SERV's discussion about community service at Olin and the use of Friday Service time tomorrow morning in the dining hall as part of Build Day. SERV will be working with community members from 9-11am and 1:30-3:30pm.*

# Performance vs. Feedback

Kai Austin  
Editor

This study began with a simple question: if a person thinks that they are not doing well in a class because they are not putting in as much effort as they should be, would that person be more or less inclined to notice the faults in the class and give feedback?

Okay, maybe not that question exactly. The original idea was not as scientifically eloquent, and it derived from a conversation I had about how we develop a sense of control over our lives. For example, if I do not do well on something, no matter how difficult the challenge is, I see it as a personal fault. I tent to shrug off comments like “that class is hard” or “the workload is absurd” as irrelevant – if I do

not do “well,” then it is still my fault. I just have to do better. With this in mind, I began to realize that I generally do not give very detailed feedback on my classes (tsk tsk, I know...), because I can never think of how the class could improve; I can only think of how I could have done better in it.

Thus, out of my own curiosity, I posed two questions to the Olin student body:

1. If you are in a class, and not doing well, do you blame yourself or do you blame the class?

2. How likely are you to give feedback for improving a class?

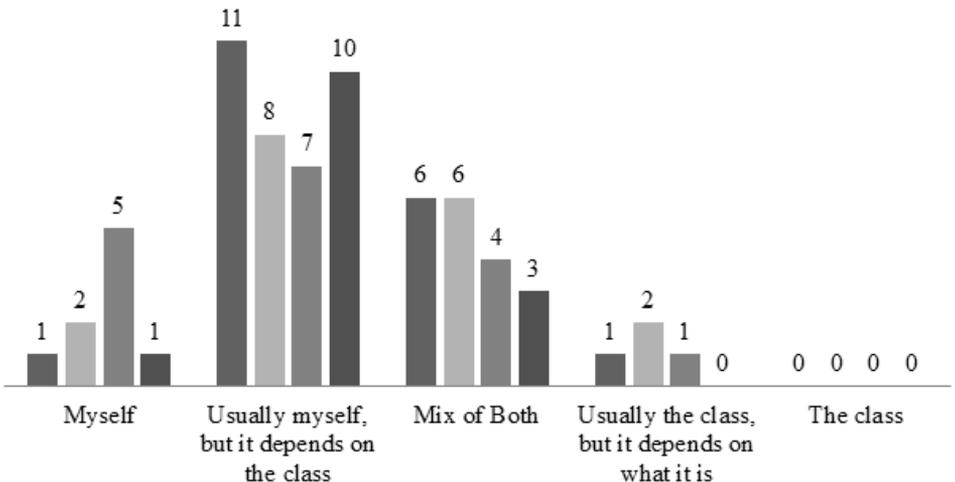
Please note, I use the term “blame” loosely. The sample size of the results was 67 students, about 15-19 (~20-25%) per year. The scales, as shown in the corresponding figures, I admit were a

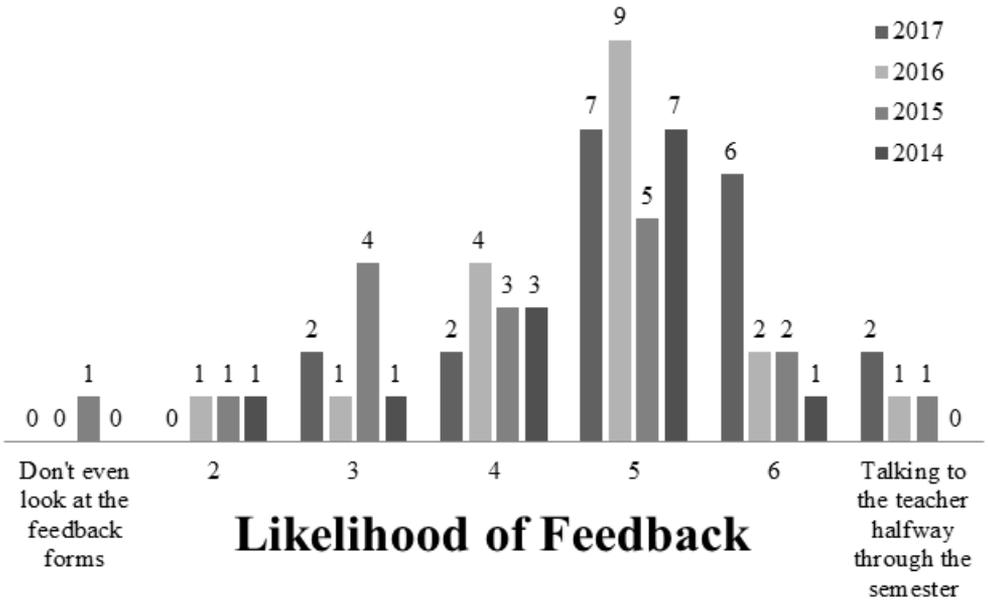
bit ambiguous. However, the results differed from my expectations. I did not see any correlation between individual's responses to the two questions at all. Distribution was fairly even across the board, no matter the year – it was just as likely that a person would answer low on the scale for #1 and high for #2, as it was for a person to answer high on #1 and low on #2.

For class performance blame (question #2), the majority noted that it often depended on the class (eg. some classes are just blatantly harder than others, or receive routine bashing either way), but otherwise they were more inclined to blame themselves for not doing well. The most common excuses provided for doing poorly were disinterest in the class, an existing personal

## Performance Blame

■ 2017 ■ 2016 ■ 2015 ■ 2014





short coming, or taking a lot of credits. It was also noted that some gauge how well they are doing based on their peers. If everyone is struggling, it is more likely that the class rather than the individual is at fault. Those who placed more blame on the class stated that the classes they do not do as well in are those that are poorly structured.

In terms of feedback (question #2), there was almost a universal idea that it depended on the feedback

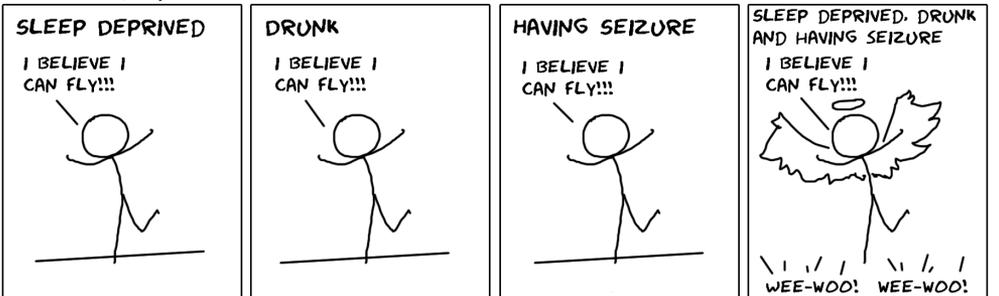
culture, but most people strive to give what they can. I also learned that solicited feedback is more likely to get responses, and feedback discussions earlier in the year make feedback seem more welcome and open. If feedback is not solicited and it is late in the year, students often feel that feedback is unwelcome, especially if a lot of people are not doing well. There is also, unfortunately, a fear that giving negative feedback may anger the professor and re-

sult in punishment of the student(s). This is practically unheard of at Olin, so don't be afraid to give your professors positive or negative constructive feedback at any point.

*Feedback is incredibly important at Olin, and we pride ourselves on our outstanding feedback culture. Don't forget to fill our your course evaluation surveys on my.olin.edu, and talk to your professors if you have anything else to add.*

NOT XKCD by Kai

GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING ALTERNATE MENTAL STATES



(IMPROMTU KARAOKE IS NOT AN ALTERNATE MENTAL STATE. YOU'RE JUST AN AWESOME HUMAN BEING.)

# VIDEOGAMETRIUM

## The Humble Beginnings of the NES

Elizabeth Mahon  
Columnist

The Nintendo Entertainment System, Nintendo's first foray into the video game system world outside of Japan, had a long and winding path from concept to execution.

It started life in Japan in 1983 as the Family Computer, commonly shortened to Famicom.

With its red and cream plastic exterior, the Famicom looked relatively toy-like. It was also novel because the controllers were wired directly to the console – no swapping allowed. The system was a huge hit, selling more than 3 million units in Japan in the first 18 months it was on the market.

The huge success caused Nintendo to turn their eyes to the United States, a much bigger market. However, in

1983, the entire North American video game market had crashed tremendously. Every retailer flat out refused to sell video game consoles. As a result, Nintendo did not want to market such a toy-like device in the United States. So, for the 1985 Consumer Electronics Show, they took the most computer-esque components of the Famicom, such as the

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*"The NES was a smash hit, selling 34 million units in the Americas."*

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keyboard and BASIC cassette writer, gave them and the Famicom a gray coat of paint, and showed these off.

The reaction was lukewarm.<sup>1</sup> Nintendo decided next to try promoting it as an "Entertainment System", more like a typical con-

sumer electronic. To do so, they intentionally patterned the newly-dubbed Nintendo Entertainment System off of a VHS player, making it a plain, gray box.

They further decided that having cartridges inserted in the top was too reminiscent of older video game consoles. Instead, they went with a "zero insertion force" design, where the cartridge was plugged in on the side then the entire assembly was pushed down.

Due to rampant Famicom piracy in Asia, Nintendo then implemented the first ever regional lockout system. This was implemented in two steps. The first was a physical difference in the cartridges – NES cartridges are bigger than their Famicom counterparts, with a different pinout. The second was on the software level. Special chips in the cartridge and console communicated to each other. If the console chip did not get all the information it expected, then it would refuse to boot the game.

These design decisions ended up having a large impact on how the NES worked down the road. The regional lockout worked as desired, reducing the amount of piracy significantly. However, unauthorized developers would not be deterred so eas-



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Famicom-Console-Set.jpg>

**Figure 1.** The original Famicom game system. It looked very toy like, sporting a red and cream plastic exterior.



**Figure 2.** The redesigned Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). The NES was redesigned to look like a traditional VHS player to earn buyers trust in the US.

ily from the potential trove of riches offered by the NES. Tengen, a spin-off of the faltering Atari, was one such developer. They monitored the communication between the chips, trying to reverse engineer the protocol. However, it took longer than management was willing to accept, so Tengen had a lawyer sneak out a copy of the program from copyright documents. Nintendo reacted strongly, suing Tengen.<sup>2</sup> The court sided with Nintendo, validating system lockout techniques.

The pinout difference of the cartridges that was necessary for their system lockout design proved to be significant. The removed

pins connected to sound chips that were included in later games, such as Castlevania 3. Removing the pins meant that the NES was cursed to have lower sound quality than the Famicom for such games.<sup>3</sup> Then, as the NES aged, a further flaw was found. The very specific handshake required by the console to boot a cartridge could easily be thwarted by an imperfect electrical connection, which naturally occurred as both cartridge and console got dirty, dusty, or succumbed to moisture. Furthermore, the zero insertion force design was not truly zero insertion force. The orthogonal motions caused the pins of the cartridge to be

slightly bent over time, further reducing the contact and making older cartridges even less reliable.<sup>4</sup>

Despite these long-term problems, in the short term the design did what was desired. The NES was a smash hit, selling 34 million units in the Americas.<sup>5</sup> It more or less singlehandedly revived the video game industry in North America, and its success was what lured Nintendo's first competitor, Sega, to enter the market, leading directly to the video game industry we see today. Many of Nintendo's largest series – the Legend of Zelda and Metroid, to name two examples – originated on the system.

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[1] *The Ultimate History of Video Games*, pg 287

[2] *The Ultimate History of Video Games*, pg 373

[3] <http://www.vintagecomputing.com/index.php/archives/90>

[4] [www.vintagecomputing.com/index.php/archives/13/nes-s0urgery-replacing-the-cursed-72-pin-connector](http://www.vintagecomputing.com/index.php/archives/13/nes-s0urgery-replacing-the-cursed-72-pin-connector)

[5] [http://www.nintendo.co.jp/ir/library/historical\\_data/pdf/consolidated\\_sales\\_e1312.pdf](http://www.nintendo.co.jp/ir/library/historical_data/pdf/consolidated_sales_e1312.pdf)

*You are Invited to the Launch Party for the*  
**North Hill-Olin College Fund for Innovation in Aging**

May 7, 2014 from 6-7:30pm at the Epicenter in South Boston

Olin College of Engineering and North Hill, a senior living community will jointly host a "Celebration of Innovation" reception to launch the North Hill-Olin College Fund for Innovation in Aging.

The featured speaker will be Doug Rauch, former president of Trader Joes' Company, CEO of Conscious Capitalism Inc., and founder and president of Daily Table. Following the lecture, Amos Meeks '14, co-founder of Lilypad Scales, will be awarded the first grant from the fund.

# People Who Make a Difference

*The question posed last time was: "Who is someone at Olin you appreciate a great deal, and why?"*

I appreciate the people who go out of their way to smile at you every time they pass you between the dorms and the dining hall. There are a few of them around campus, and they always brighten my day.

---

Anonymous  
Contributor

Jean Huang. She has so many students under her wings at her lab, helps students get started in research, and shares with them the amazing world of microbes. She also shares this passion

through the pickles and jams co-curricular, in which she and students make pickles, sauerkraut, kimchi, jams, butter and chocolate sauerkraut cake. Lastly, as busy as she is, she doesn't let that keep her from smiling and laughing, and I want to be like her when I get older.

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Anonymous  
Contributor

This isn't a particular person, but the R2s in general are people I appreciate a lot. They're awesome role models, friends, and people overall, and I'm super grateful to have them around.

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Anonymous  
Contributor

I think Graham and Trevor, in addition to just generally being awesome and approachable, have made large, visible efforts to improve the Olin community in a way that they found important.

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Anonymous  
Contributor

Oscar Mur-Miranda. No matter what, Oscar always greets me (and everyone else) with a huge smile. He brightens my day and has been incredibly helpful to me in the past as well.

---

Anonymous  
Contributor

*Keep your eye out for September's question, to be sent out in August.*

## Thank You from Frankly Speaking

Lyra Silverwolf  
Editor in Chief

I would like to sincerely thank every single person who has made the 5th volume of Frankly Speaking such a success. As you all know, a newspaper cannot survive without inspired writers and a

devoted staff, both of which I have been so grateful to have this year as editor in chief.

A big thank you to every person who contributed in any way to Frankly Speaking this year. No matter how small your contribution was, they sum to one of the most successful years the paper

has seen in its short existence. Let's keep the ball rolling!

I also owe a tremendous thanks to the Olin College IT department for letting us print for free each month.

Have a great summer, and don't forget about Frankly Speaking when you feel like writing!

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## Want to write for Frankly Speaking?

Send us your articles at

[SUBMIT@FRANKLYSPEAKINGNEWS.COM](mailto:SUBMIT@FRANKLYSPEAKINGNEWS.COM)

Or check out the website at

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Special thanks to Allie Duncan.