Statement on Mirror Lake

11/25/2013

Fellow Students,

Yesterday The Ohio State University announced new restrictions and regulations surrounding Mirror Lake Jump Night. Mirror Lake Night is a night of celebrating the tradition of excellence at Ohio State and is one of the most memorable nights of the year for many Ohio State students. Since the announcement was made, students have been vocal about their displeasure with the modifications and I share their sentiment.

While there are multiple dangers surrounding the jump, including alcohol poisoning, other dangerous illnesses and crime, the measures the university is undertaking to prevent such behaviors are misguided. First, using a single entry and exit point at the lake, as well as enforcing the wearing of wristbands, will create a significant bottleneck and increase the time students are exposed to the elements. This will in turn increase the likelihood of hypothermia and other such illnesses for participants. In addition, such a bottleneck will increase the likelihood of violent conflict by those waiting to enter or exit the Mirror Lake area. Second, this concentration of resources controlling the entry and exit point will decrease the response time for any incidents that do occur inside or outside of the fencing. Finally, I believe that the method and timing of this announcement was lacking. University officials did not give students enough time to effectively prepare for such drastic changes, and this may spur participation in more dangerous activities. While it is important to make the event as safe as possible for all participants, I believe the steps the university plans are rash and may create more problems than they solve. Herding students into a fenced in area to participate in this jump is unwise and dangerous.

I do not endorse the new constraints on Mirror Lake Night and I will continue to share student’s feedback, petitions and student stories with university officials in hopes of dissuading the university from its current path.

Taylor Stepp
Undergraduate Student Government President
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