

"We Don't Have It All Together"

We will not sit in "normal" chairs as if the situation at Heinz College is okay; Our community is *not* okay.

Sitting on the floor rather than in chairs, desks, or tables draws attention to the way we interact here at Heinz. One indicator of community health are its material symbols—such as signs in public spaces—which impact the lived experience of community members by signaling who is welcome and who is not.

Recent, disturbing events at Heinz College have brought into sharp focus what could be termed a *crisis of community* within our institution. Rather than collaboration and exploration, a spirit of competition, mistrust, exhaustion, and rigidity flow through our halls and classrooms. These currents negatively impact the spiritual health and day-to-day well being of all of us, including those who occupy positions of influence. This action seeks to promote changes to which positively impact our entire community: staff, teachers, masters & PhD students.

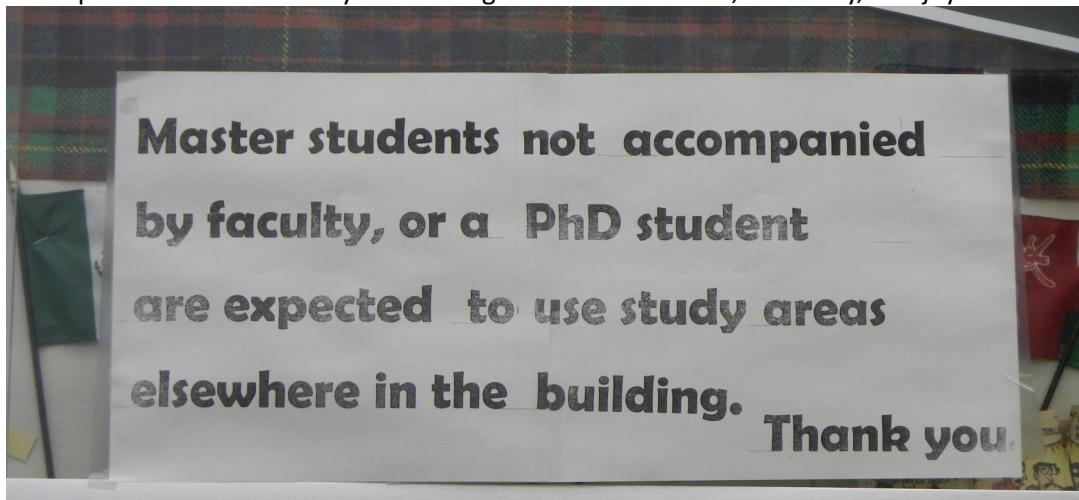
The act of refusing to use traditional seating structures in Hamburg Hall's public and semi-public spaces will continue until:

- 1) Heinz College leadership take tangible steps to adjust the crisis of spirit at our College, including adjusting the exclusionary signs on the third floor, and**
- 2) Leadership issues a formal statement explaining the changes made, the rationale for doing so, and concrete plans for future improvements. These plans should not be unilateral and instead should grow from collaboration and meaningful dialog.**

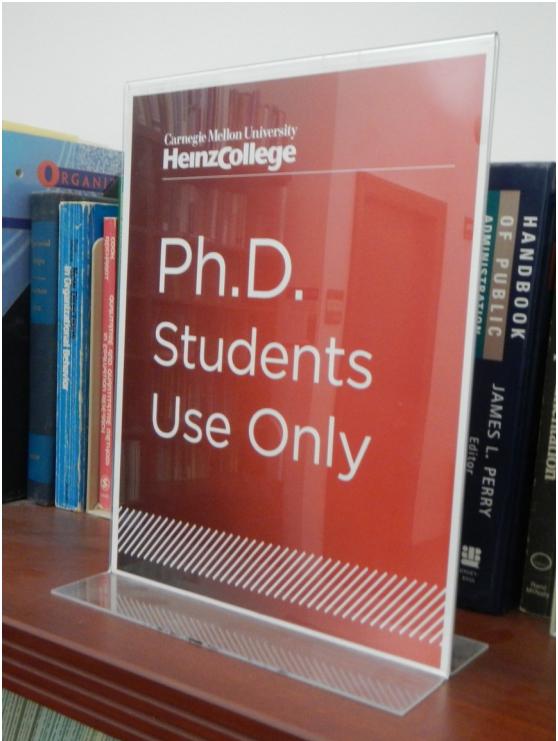
All students, faculty members, and staff are invited to join in this action as they feel appropriate.

This action is not about signs *per se*, or masters students wanting to sit in forbidden chairs for the sake comfort or convenience. Rather, we must start the process somewhere, so let's start with the obvious problems and proceed from there together.

HOW TO TAKE ACTION: Start by sitting on the floor during your next class or meeting. THEN contact professor Rahul Telang, rtelang@andrew.cmu.edu, who is in a leadership position within the PhD Student community, and is the contact person for addressing the material symbols found in third floor semi-public areas. Ask him to take the current signs down and, if necessary, make new ones which don't promote exclusionary academic hierarchies which damage all of us. Finally, please contact Heinz College's Dean Krishnan at rk2x@cmu.edu with specific ideas about ways to infuse greater collaboration, humanity, and joy within Heinz College.



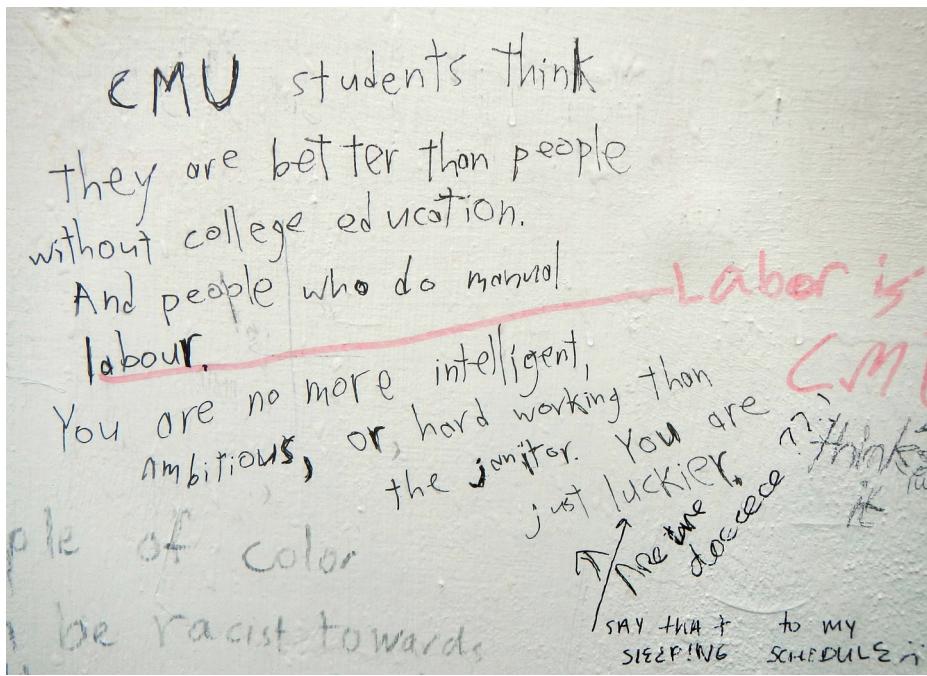
A photograph of a sign in the HBH 3rd floor copy area above a set of couches and chairs. While seemingly "polite," signs of this nature have the effect of eroding healthy community by declaring some types of people welcome and others not. What impact do exclusionary practices have on the PhD students and faculty?



One of two identical signs posted in a wide hallway containing two tables on the HBH third floor outside of professors' offices.



A photograph of a copy of an anonymous note distributed along with yellow ribbons drawing attention to the sudden death of Rajat Patra in March, 2016.



A photograph of an anonymous exchange of comments written on an art installation piece located in the public "Art Park" on Forbes Ave, across from the CMU Electric Car facility. Photo taken in March 2016. The art installation has been removed.

When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer, by Walt Whitman

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were
ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and
diagrams, to add, divide, and measure
them,

When I sitting heard the astronomer
where he lectured with much
applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became
tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off
by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and
from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the
stars.