Editorial:
Drug issues strike Rider

Current trends show that the number of drug cases as well as drug arrests has been on a steady incline over the past three years. In addition, there have been several reported incidents involving drug use in the Hill Residence Hall over the past week and a half. It is unclear what exactly is causing these increases but there are many possible explanations. The first of these is that police have been cracking down harder on drug offenses. During the 2001-2002 school year the Lawrence Township Police Department (LPD) made seven drug arrests. In 2002-2003 the number increased to 10 and has increased further to 15 in only the first semester of this year.

These numbers seem to indicate that new security measures have made it much easier to catch drug users. One of these measures is late evening to early morning patrols by the LPD on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. These patrols greatly increase the response speed of the police to drug complaints. In addition to the LPD’s increased response time, Rider campus security has also begun responding to drug complaints in a much more timely fashion. Previously, when a complaint was made about the smell of marijuana, campus security would sometimes not respond until the smell had already dissipated. Because of this, it did not have sufficient evidence to enter several rooms.

Today, Security arrives much more quickly after they are called. With the evidence still fresh, it can easily enter suspected rooms and catch drug users. This could be one of the main reasons why such a jump in drug arrests is taking place.

On the other hand, students could simply be giving security more opportunities to catch them. Since drug arrests had been down over the previous years, drug users could have conceivably gone lax in their attempts to avoid detection.

Most drug arrests begin when someone detects the smell of burning marijuana in their hallway. While complaints had been made in previous years, their volume has never been greater than it has been this year. This is especially important because without student complaints, campus security is powerless to act. Security is not permitted to enter student rooms without evidence of illegal activity taking place inside. While a call from a student is not enough evidence in itself, it alerts security about potential problem areas that it can investigate.

The increased complaint volume is most likely the result of careless students. It is never been greater than it has been this year. This is especially important because without student complaints, campus security is powerless to act. Security is not permitted to enter student rooms without evidence of illegal activity taking place inside. While a call from a student is not enough evidence in itself, it alerts security about potential problem areas that it can investigate.

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