The Educated Voter: Citizens control Supreme Court's fate

On Nov. 2, 2004 our country will take part in a very crucial election, possibly the most important election in our lifetime. If you are from New Jersey or Pennsylvania and have missed the deadline for voter registration, I would still advise you to get out and register so that four years from now you can become an active voter.

The message that I hope to get across to the entire Rider community is that this election is more than deciding which candidate is more conservative or liberal. It is a chance to give up some of their privacy for the greater good. However, there is no need for additional cameras to be placed in the academic and residential quads or inside residence hall lobbies. The invasion of privacy this would cause is unacceptable.

Currently, security officers in squad cars patrol the quad areas. In addition, the University has formed a partnership with the Lawrence Police Department (LPD) to send extra patrols around the Lawrenceville campus on weekends. This partnership increased reaction time to complaints and also provided for extra eyes to watch over the campus. So why do we need to add cameras?

Furthermore, cameras in the residence quad present a hazard to students’ privacy in their own rooms. Pelco cameras installed on a corner of the Bart Luedeke Center have the ability to zoom in to the end of the O-Loft as well as the construction area while retaining clarity. Since the residence quad is much smaller than this distance, imagine the possibilities that could then arise from a camera being placed on, say, Olson Residence Hall. Security would be able to see into the windows of every room in Conover, Swiftli, Hall and possibly Wright Halls that happen to face the camera. Residents would be forced to close their blinds and forgo the sun in order to attain the privacy they are entitled to.

Last year, a series of thefts were committed inside Rider’s residence halls. Wallets, cell phones and money were stolen from many students’ rooms. After some time, Security was able to apprehend the suspect, a student’s boyfriend who had been staying in her room for several weeks. As a result of this incident, Rider’s policy regarding overnight visitors, which required them to check in with a Resident Advisor (RA), was more strictly enforced.

This example illustrates that there are ways to deal with crime in the residence halls other than installing security cameras. Since the guest policy became more rigidly enforced, there has not been another string of robberies of this magnitude. The problem has been fixed and there is nothing to necessitate the introduction of surveillance equipment. If there is a viable alternative to encroaching upon students’ rights to privacy then it should be taken.

In addition, installing cameras in residence hall lobbies would be almost completely useless. Crime in the halls does not take place in plain view; it takes place inside individual rooms. The only way to prevent robberies would then be to install cameras in every student’s room and that is unacceptable under any circumstances. Dorm rooms are uncomfortable enough as it is without Big Brother watching your every move.

Furthermore, Rider already has a defense against crime in the residence halls. Wallers, cell phones and money were stolen from many students’ rooms. After some time, Security was able to apprehend the suspect, a student’s boyfriend who had been staying in her room for several weeks. As a result of this incident, Rider’s policy regarding overnight visitors, which required them to check in with a Resident Advisor (RA), was more strictly enforced.

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The security cameras located in the parking lots and construction area of the Lawrenceville campus are an invaluable asset. The security cameras located in the parking lots and construction areas, have fulfilled their purpose and helped to apprehend two criminals. However, installing these cameras in the quad areas and residence halls should be done only as a last resort.

This weekly editorial expresses the majority opinion of The Rider News editorial board and is written by the Opinion Editor.