

Rapid-Fire Opinions

Mario or Luigi?

Luigi, hands down. Better color, better brother.

Best musical artist?

Tool or Audioslave. I refuse to choose between the two, they're both equally amazing.

Sweet or savory?

Savory. I've never been big on sweets. Oreos are pretty addictive though.

Favorite fictional character?

Donkey Kong. Funny monkey.

Favorite color?

Purple. It's the color of royalty.

Dogs or cats?

As much as I love cats, I gotta give it to dogs. I just love their energy.

Next Poll

Tea Vs. Coffee

Which do you prefer: tea or coffee?

Students can answer the poll on The Herald's Instagram page, [@astateherald](https://www.instagram.com/astateherald). Instagram polls are posted on Mondays. Previous poll results can be found on theherald.home.blog/category/opinion/poll/.

Have an idea for a poll? Send your ideas to heraldopinion1921@gmail.com.

These and future articles can be found on the Opinion section of The Herald's website. All comics and memes can be found in the Comics section.



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LAILA CASIANO

SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

What is "Latinx?" The term "Latinx" used to be foreign to me. I didn't know what it meant until 2020. All I knew was that this was the new way many politicians referred to the Hispanic community. I didn't care as much then. It really meant nothing to me when it was making waves throughout the campaigning season. Promises to better Hispanic communities, to help and aid Hispanic and Latino/a/x immigrants and to help the children of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (D.A.C.A.). I didn't see it as anything but a new collective noun. That was until I saw the

uproar on social media, and I saw the community itself not liking the term at all. I was confused, to say the least.

I was under the impression that this was something that derived from the entire community, so I just rolled with it. But there was a lot of upheaval surrounding this term. Exaggerated, but true. I didn't understand why until I spoke to people who were also Hispanic or of Latin descent. I asked them, "What is 'Latinx?'"

This term actually began during the early 2000's, but it really skyrocketed during recent elections. "Latinx" was this openness term to identify the Hispanic and Latino/a/x community with Hispanic and Latino/a/x descents who didn't necessarily identify as male or female. The 'x' being the inclusive marker for gender queerness. When coming to this realization, I was understanding. Inclusivity and awareness of gender identity and culture is important, especially in Hispanic and Latino/a/x culture. This is where the dispute begins.

Spanish is a gendered language by nature; words have masculine and feminine traits. There isn't really a term which can identify someone who is non-binary. For example, simple pronouns such as "ellos" and "ellas" have designated genders. "Ellos" refers to a group of men while "ellas" refers to a group of women. However, whenever you identify a group of mixed genders, you'd say the masculine version: "ellos." "Ellas" would only be used if the group is exclusively women. Things like this are ingrained in the language and although I understand the frustration whenever the discussion of gender queerness and even the vast difference of men and women in the language is brought up, this is the language's nature. You cannot change years and years of a developing language.

The other side of the debate is that the term "Latinx" is not necessarily...easy to say in Spanish. It's not that we can't say it, we can, but it's just awkward. It's not as smooth and fluid as it is in English,

and whether you have native Spanish speakers living in the United States or not, it's unnatural.

Pew Research in 2020 showed that 3% of Hispanics used the term to identify themselves, only 23% were aware of the term's existence and 76% were not aware of the term.

I talked to Arkansas State University's Hispanic Outreach and Latino/a/x Appreciation's (HOLA) president, Dulce Vicente, about Latinx. We mused over the term and had both come to the same conclusion – one that I think a lot of people who are not within the community don't necessarily understand. It's really just a matter of personal preference. Anti-climatic, I know, but it really is that simple. There are arguments for including and opening the idea of gender identity and the queer spectrum in the culture, but also understand that gendered language is ingrained in Spanish. It's a tough debate – one with no real happy medium or solution. It really is

a toss up. Many arguments can be made about it, but it all roots back to respecting the existence of gender queer individuals and respecting the language that many people learn at birth. Are there faults and wrongs in the Spanish language that people in this century want to fix or change? Yes, of course. It's not just Spanish though; it's other languages too. Latin based or not. But, how people want to refer to our community is oftentimes by word of mouth. You hear what is most used and just go along.

I went through all of this discovery, and I still don't mind how much will refer to my community. Is hearing 'Latinx' still weird? Yes. Do I understand its significance? Yes. Do I have a preference? Yes. It's a giant heap of preference and identity. Some would dismiss the term entirely, and it's fair. I don't think they mean to dismiss the existence of gender queer people rather they dismiss the term because it's new and unfamiliar.

Biden's Loan Forgiveness: A Step Forward Or Disaster In The Making?



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JACK BOND

OPINION EDITOR

A few weeks ago, Biden announced plans to ease the debts of college students across the country. People with student loans who make less than \$125k will be eligible for up to \$20,000 in loan forgiveness if they received Pell grants and up to \$10,000 if they didn't. On top of this, the plan aims to make future loan repayments more manageable. It plans to reduce monthly payments from 10% of income to 5%, prevent loan balances from growing as long

as monthly payments are made and raise the amount of income considered non-discretionary (income protected from repayments).

For the average, working-class citizen, this plan looks amazing. It eases the weight of debt that crushes the shoulders of many Americans by a fair bit. In an economy where employment and living wages are a struggle to come by, this plan is a welcome one.

This rings especially true when you consider that higher education is almost hailed as a necessity to live a happy life. While I don't necessarily believe this myself, it is undoubtedly ingrained in us at a young age. College education leads to more success, which leads to a happier life. It seems unfair that the ticket to this higher quality of life is priced at such insane amounts that people enter a lifetime of debt to obtain it. So any plans that aim to make this more affordable and manageable are

cool in my book.

But there are a lot of factors that need to be taken into account when implementing such a massive plan like this one.

One of the first arguments I saw against this is that it punishes those who worked hard to avoid going into debt (i.e., earning a scholarship) and those who worked hard to pay off their debt. There is no punishment for those people; they are not being punished for avoiding their debt. Yes, they may have worked a little harder than those who did accumulate debt, but they are in no way being punished by this new plan. This is the only argument that I take issue with because of how ridiculous it is. The other counterarguments to Biden's plan hold a lot more weight.

The major, and probably most obvious repercussion of this plan is the effect it will have on national debt. Since many Americans will have

\$20k forgiven, the burden of payment will fall on the government. According to the Budget Wharton Model, the plan could end up costing anywhere from \$469 billion to \$519 billion. Considering the already staggering \$30 trillion debt the U.S. already has, this would be unbelievably detrimental to the economy. The plan could also lead to inflation, but the effect would be modest according to experts. Americans will not receive the money all at once, but rather slowly make less monthly payments over time.

While this plan is a step in

the right direction, it doesn't address the issue that causes this debt in the first place. Why is the ticket to higher education priced so high that it ruins people's lives? Why is the amount of money accumulated in student debt so ridiculously high? On top of this, Biden's plan introduces a few problems in its attempt to solve the issue of student debt. This plan is certainly better than nothing, but there needs to be fundamental changes in the system that causes this insurmountable debt if things are to get better.



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