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Editorial



The Means to an End

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In a country where, in 2017, alleged dissent against authority can result in public lynching within the walls of an educational institution, questions about the political freedom allotted to students within societal spheres cannot help but be raised. While active participation in politics remains banned on college campuses in Pakistan following the 2003 Supreme Court ruling, educational institutes remain the breeding ground for new ideologies that guide socio-political patterns amongst the country's youth. LUMS, priding itself on an environment that encourages the cultivation of active student discourse, stands out in the degree of agency it allots to its students. The cyclical unfurling of tensions between all stakeholders within an institution may be considered a rite-of-passage that guides the evolution of all power structures – within families, universities or governments – and the existence of dissenting opinions continues to raise the importance of spaces that allow intellectual growth. This past academic year has seen the LUMS student body rise in unison on various platforms, and has witnessed the brewing of an active educational culture that is expected of an informed student-body.

While it is popular to dismiss the university experience offered here by referring to the “LUMS bubble”, it must not be discounted that the campus remains a melting pot of identities and narratives; the acquirement of a rich cultural capital begins the moment students step within these walls. The space for growth exists within the ‘campus culture’ in itself, whereby various lines of society continue to intersect at various levels. As the university continues to expand and transform in the physical sense – the School of Education, the Coca-Cola Aquatic Centre, and even the much debated extension of the *Khokha* may be considered examples – a change of less tangible capacity is ever evident amongst the student body.

The fact that these very concrete changes continue to be subjects of heat amongst the extended student body testify to the constant state of flux that envelops the LUMS experience. As the merits of security and freedom – academic, political, religious- are discussed within the walls of HSS auditoriums, an active social discourse continues to take off in other spaces, online and physical. Blue buttons see initiatives spur off into action, and green benches witness expressions of collective solidarity in loss, remorse and passion.

This is a space where official student election campaigns continue to stir up new arenas of discussion, and where private initiatives for change continue to mobilize support. This is a space where powerful state representatives can find an active, inquisitive audience, and where discussions critical of state-endorsed laws can be held within the very week. This is a space where the student-body can engage in long held traditions of farewell, and where it can simultaneously debate their relationship to political correctness and cultural sensitivity.

It should be understood that the act of keeping multiple narratives alive within campus is that of responsibility. As another graduating batch begins to question the years spent absorbing the ever-evolving culture LUMS has to offer, it must be acknowledged that being part of it is the means towards an end. Within a political cultural that continues to raise questions of security, freedom, privilege and acceptance, to be exposed to – and be part of - multiple discourses is merely the starting point of a lifelong process that is sure to continue outside these red-brick walls.