

by northwest7  
on December 4, 2016  
under Opinion  
∞ Permalink

## EDITORIAL: SHORTSIGHTED SENATE VOTE PUTS SCALES IN STUDENT BATHROOMS

Posted: Monday, February 9, 2015 8:00 am

By Kindsi Lora

Photo by Tucker Dana



I find it incredibly naïve that our own student senate would vote to fund the placement of scales in the residence halls' bathrooms. Beyond this, the residence life staff – Resident Assistants (RA) and Area Coordinators (AC) – whose job is to act as ambassadors for the residents were not informed about the decision.

"I didn't find out about it until after I saw a senator carrying scales and I asked what they were for," said Mikayla Day, RA of Guy 100. "When I expressed my concern she told me the senator from my building would contact me about it. But most RAs found them in their bathrooms and didn't know where they had come from."

This not only reveals a lack of consideration in making the decision but a lack of communication with other student leaders that were directly impacted by senate's decision. Even when evaluating the [minutes](#) from the January 22<sup>nd</sup> senate meeting, during which the decision was made, it reveals no discussion about adverse effects of having scales in the dorms. Some students question where it's fair to criticize the senate's decision, however.

"I think that to write an article about this might just stir up controversy about what was truly an honest effort to make the school better on senate's part," said TJ Lukkasson, Perks 300 RA.

While I agree that it is senate's job to put student proposals into action, I am willing to risk stirring up controversy to bring awareness to an issue that according the *American Journal of Psychiatry (AJP)* has a mortality rate 12 times higher than all other causes of death for females 15 to 24 years old.

"I agree with TJ, I think you can find more interesting things to write about," said Fletcher Price, Perks 200 RA. "There are so many deep issues within campus that can be brought to the surface."

But what is deeper than confronting an issue that the National Institute of Mental Health estimates to impact 25 percent of our student population?

According to research cited by the Eating Recovery Center of Washington, between five and 20 percent of individuals struggling with anorexia will die from the disorder. Putting that into perspective, if eating disorders just impacted females at NU there would be between seven and 30 women who will die from anorexia. That's up to an entire floor of NU residents dying.

Are scales the problem in and of themselves? No. But the presence of a scale in a common area jeopardizes the safety of the living environment for too many people.

If student leaders refuse to acknowledge the struggles faced by students as discussions worth having than we need to reevaluate our approach to leadership. We must value one another enough to fight the temptation to remain comfortably uninformed about the real issues students face daily.

To say this is a "girls' issue" is not only invalid but ignorant, when according to the *AJP* 10 to 15 percent of people with anorexia and bulimia are male. Beyond that, any man who is (or plans to one day be) a husband, father, pastor – or just in general a man who interacts with women – could benefit from being informed about the way eating disorders and body image impact society and how scales may play a role for the NU community.

I'm no expert, but I can speak from my own experience and the experience of the women around me. Personally, body image has never been my biggest struggle. I can go months without feeling the need to step on a scale, but once a scale is made readily available to me there is intense temptation to keep checking my weight and become over obsessed and insecure about it.

What starts as genuine curiosity quickly becomes an obsession that leads to unhealthy or addictive behaviors for many.

"Personally, I don't think scales are necessary," said Marta Watling, Crowder 600 RA. "If girls are confident in how they look on the outside, a number shouldn't change that! Scales are always a downfall for me. Also... The only time I've needed a scale at NU was to weigh my suitcase for Choralons."

I too, in my three-and-a-half years in the dorms, have only needed a scale to weigh suitcases and even then I found an alternative method.

RAs Mikayla Day (Guy 100) and Sami Price (Guy 200) have both removed the scales from their bathrooms after residents expressed not wanting to have it on their floor. Other female RAs said they hope their residents let them know if the presence of a scale is difficult for them, as they are more than willing to remove it from the bathroom.

As the scales are removed from our eyes on this issue it is essential that we reevaluate the necessity of having them in our bathrooms.

\*If you are a current student struggling with an eating disorder you can get help by talking to your RA, AC or contacting the wellness center at: [wellnesscenter@northwestu.edu](mailto:wellnesscenter@northwestu.edu)