EXERCISE 4

LEADS

CAMPUS STORIES

Write only a lead for each of the following stories. Assume that all the stories occurred on your campus. As you write the leads, consult the checklist on Page 143. Correct errors if necessary. A professional has been asked to write a lead for each of these stories, and the leads appear in a manual available to your instructor. However, you may find that you like some of your own and your classmates’ leads better.

1. A journalism professor at your school has sparked a heated debate. She teaches a course titled “Communication Law.” During her class last week Friday, she took her class outdoors and burned a small American flag. She said the flag was “a teaching tool.” The class was discussing Supreme Court cases that defined flag-burning as protected speech. The teacher, assistant professor Denise Beall, said she hoped her action would spark debate in the classroom about free-speech issues. “It was not a personal act,” she said. “It was a pedagogical one.” This morning, about 250 students, led by veterans groups on your campus, gathered to protest the flag-burning. They marched to the building where Beall was teaching the course. The protesters entered the building, stood outside the room where the class was in session, and sang the national anthem. The students also said the Pledge of Allegiance and chanted “U.S.A.” In a statement issued soon thereafter, the president of your school said Beall had used “extraordinarily bad judgment” in burning the flag. But, your president said, it would be inappropriate for the school to do anything further to question or punish her teaching techniques.

2. At first, it seemed like a wonderful idea! Your schools president learned the wife of the President of the United States was going to be in the area. He proceeded to invite her to deliver your schools commencement address for this spring’s graduating class—and she accepted. Now, opposition is arising. About a week ago, a half-dozen senior women began circulating a petition opposing her delivering the commencement address and, thus far, more than 300 of their classmates have signed it. “To honor the First Lady as a commencement speaker,” says the petition, “is to honor a woman who has gained recognition through the achievements of her husband, which contradicts what we have been taught over our years of study—that women should be honored for their achievements, not their husbands.” The president of your institution has scheduled a meeting for late Friday to discuss the issue with members of the graduating class.

3. College students have an unusual problem that has gone largely unnoticed in the past. Some call it “freshman fat.” Others call it “the Freshman 5,” “the Freshman 10,” “the Freshman 15” or even “the Freshman 20.” Now, a specialist at your school is studying the issue and finding some truth to the folklore. Freshmen women, she found, are more than twice as likely to gain a significant amount of weight as similar women who don’t go to college. Of your schools incoming freshmen last year, 26% gained weight. By comparison, 9% of a group of comparable young women in your community who did not enroll in college gained weight. Freshman Fat isn’t considered a serious health threat. Five or 10 extra pounds don’t make a big difference for most people. The best remedy, in fact, may be to ignore the extra weight: sooner or later, your eating habits
are bound to settle down. A constellation of factors lies behind Freshman Fat: sudden freedom from parental rules; overabundance of choices; erratic, late hours; a more sedentary life; a social life that revolves around eating and drinking. And stress. Food is the age-old comforter. Linda Kasparov, a licensed dietitian at your school, conducted the study and released all the information about the results of it today.

4. There’s a heated, controversial debate at your school. The school has a foundation that invests its money in various stocks, bonds and properties. A reporter for your student paper last week uncovered the fact that some of the money is invested in tobacco companies. Now some people want the foundation to eliminate those stocks from its investment portfolio. The editor of your student paper advocates the elimination of such stock and, in an interview with you today explained quite persuasively that, “Cigarettes have been responsible for millions of deaths, and owning shares in the companies that produce them sends a conflicting message to both students and the public. Furthermore, the foundation, and thus our school, is benefiting from those deaths: from the sale of a product known to kill its users.” The Board of Regents met at 8 a.m. this morning, and the topic was one of several on its agenda. It voted 8–1 that the foundation not be ordered to sell any of its tobacco stocks.

5. Last week a group of medical researchers conducted an unusual survey of the women on your campus. As part of an effort to learn more about students needs and ways of improving student health care, doctors at your student clinic conducted an unusual survey, personally contacting and interviewing a random sample of 1,044 women on campus last week. The women were interviewed in person and were also asked to complete anonymous questionnaires developed by the researchers. The researchers found that almost 1 in 10 had had an abortion at some point in her life. “I was shocked, to be quite frank,” said Robert Einhorn, the clinic’s director. “We have some students who come to us, learn they’re pregnant, and ask about their options. Some want a referral to a clinic that performs abortions, and there are a number of names that we give them. But I never thought we were talking about this number of students. Of course, some reported having their abortions years ago—as young as the age of 12.” More specifically, 9.41 percent of the women students surveyed said they have had an abortion. 1.7% of the women students have had two abortions.

6. Five students on your campus, all members of a fraternity, Sigma Kappa Chi, have been arrested as the result of a hazing incident. The investigation began after one SKC pledge was hospitalized Saturday with serious internal injuries and another with a sprained back. Each of the five was charged with two counts of battery. The incident occurred during a fraternity meeting Friday at which members “beat pledges with wooden paddles and canes and subjected them to other forms of physical and verbal punishment,” according to Detective Sgt. Albert Wei, who headed the investigation. One of the two injured students, sophomore Roland Dessaur, was hospitalized for kidney damage and dehydration. Another sophomore, Eddie Muldair, was treated for a sprained back and bruised buttocks. State laws require hospital officials to report injuries that appear to be the result of a crime. Thus, hospital officials notified the police and, as the investigation continued, four other pledges were taken to the hospital and also examined, then released. Several suffered contusions, Wei said. A university spokesman said both university and national fraternity officials are investigating to determine what disciplinary action, if any, should be taken against the fraternity.