

## Protest against Dow Corning justified

First off, I'd like to commend the balanced and pertinent coverage of the protest against Dow at the Life Sciences Career Fair on Thursday by Ms. Mitchell ("Protestors decry Dow at career fair" by Whitney Mitchell, Nov. 3). One of the key goals of such actions is to raise awareness among the student population. Your reports have a positive impact on thousands of students on campus in helping them make an informed career choice.

Having said that, I am troubled by some statements made in the article by the Dow Corning representative, Mr. McClarnon. Fifty percent of Dow Corning is owned by Dow Chemical and the rest by Corning. Dow and Dow Corning are inextricably linked. Four Dow Chemical representatives are on the board of directors for Dow Corning. Some serve on the board for both groups. A look at Dow Chemical's products Web page shows Dow Corning's products listed. Any investor report on Dow Chemical includes news on Dow Corning. This list is endless. So to say that Dow Chemical is just a "shareholder" of Dow Corning is just a ridiculous spin intended to divert students' attention.

Another quote Mr. McClarnon makes is on the ability of the IU students to make an informed choice. He claims Dow has a good recruiting record at IU and is sure it will continue, despite our protest. It is either bravado, or he underestimates IU students. In the past, Dow got away talking about its "good side" and students trusted it. The University is complicit in establishing this trust. Students are vulnerable when job-hunting and assume a company on the IU campus is reputable. IU has no such benchmark and is doing students a disservice by denying full disclosure. Now students have both sides of the story.

Lastly, Mr. McClarnon is "probably" sorry for the 25,000 dead and 150,000 suffering in Bhopal. If he really were, he would do something about it. He would talk to the Dow board members in his company. He would educate his fellow employees on Bhopal. The other representative at the career fair was unaware of the Bhopal disaster! And he would take the time to learn about the current situation at Bhopal ([www.bhopal.net](http://www.bhopal.net)) instead of barking at our presence at his table.

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## Spiderman's uncle was right!

I read about the protest by volunteers of the Association for India's Development against a campus recruitment effort of Dow Corning in the Nov. 3 Indiana Daily Student ("Protestors decry Dow at career fair" by Whitney Mitchell).

Corning, a U.S.-based corporation, denied its answerability to Dow Chemicals, which has been widely held responsible for the Bhopal tragedy in India in 1984 that killed several thousands. Not only has the tragedy been unanswered for, but it has sadly been perpetuated by the law and government systems as a whole. Corning's "About us" statement on [www.dowcorning.com](http://www.dowcorning.com) says that "... Dow Corning is equally owned by The Dow Chemical Company and Corning, Incorporated." The representative of the company claimed that the students had misplaced their protests since Corning was not a division of Dow Chemicals. As I am not a lawyer, I honestly do not presume to know whether or not Corning is accountable.

However, I do know that Corning is a shareholder, as confessed by its Web site and the recruiter. Whether they need to or not, they can sit in a boardroom meeting, being a major shareholder. Thousands of protestors whose hearts go out to the victims would sacrifice their time and careers to get 15 minutes of such proximity to Dow Chemical authorities. Corning, as a corporation that declares its commitment to environmental and health issues and more than 50 percent of whose interests lie abroad, is in a powerful position to become a part of this protest.

Has it become too much to ask a few well-placed individuals with great power to show some responsibility to their conscience and not merely to their corporate contracts and legal bindings? I appeal to Dow Corning to view the protest as a reminder of the responsibility that it needs to shoulder - a responsibility that comes from its power of being at the right place at the right time with its ammunition of stock statements, instead of cardboard placards in the hands of a few well-meaning students. I also appeal to IU authorities to take note of such ethical-emotional conflicts that influence the international student community in their career choices.

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# JORDAN RIVER FORUM

THURSDAY,  
NOVEMBER 9, 2006

7