



DR. BRIANNA BURKE

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 photo submitted

This year UHURU took on a new advisor, Dr. Brianna Burke. Burke is an Assistant Professor of English and focuses on environmental justice, ecocriticism, Native American literature, and multi-cultural 20th Century American literature.

Burke says that she decided to get involved with the magazine because “it deals with issues pretty

close to my heart.”

While Burke loves the fact that UHURU is a student driven magazine, she says that she “would like to see the magazine cover more topics that affect ISU students directly,” she says about shifting the focus of the magazine.

“I think the creativity matches what you guys were talking about. Culture is weird and absurd and serious and funny,” says Burke.

Coming from teaching in an East Coast education system, Burke notes that it is inspiring to see how many students pay their own way through college and work hard to earn their education; she truly hopes that students can use resources on campus, such as UHURU, to further their learning.

As we began talking about some of the topics that are featured in this issue, such as the election and social justice issues, Burke prefaced the rest of our discussion by saying “I’m a democrat. I tell my students that up front because I think they should know that bias.”

And while she supports President Obama in there are

things that she wishes were different.

“I hate the President’s energy policy; I know why he’s doing it, but I think Romney is far worse,” Burke says.

While she recognizes that the President has put money behind clean energy and supporting wind and solar energy, businesses that would support jobs in Iowa, she wants a more progressive energy plan. “I thought Obama was a progressive but I think [now] that he’s conservative.”

“I would like to see us end all tax breaks for energy companies except for clean energy [companies],” says Burke.

“Take all of those subsidies that we give to coal, oil, and natural gas and put it into wind and solar and maybe a little to bio-fuel.” Burke says that she doesn’t like ethanol: “I don’t think that we should be taking food and making it into fuel. The algae based bio-fuel is a bit smarter,” she says.

Burke says that her top three hot button issues are environmental issues, women’s issues, and minority issues.

“I think gender should be a prominent issue on campus, for both men and women,” says Burke. “The women’s issue shouldn’t just be a women’s issue, it should be an everyone’s issue.”

Burke thinks that people don’t even think about the wage disparity of women, as well as minorities. Currently women get paid 80 cents to the dollar and African-American men get paid 72 cents to the dollar, compared to white males.

When asked about how she thinks students should get involved in supporting issues she says that people have to make these fights personal. Start small with making simple decisions like carrying a reusable cup or buying local produce only.

“Also be willing to have the conversation with people,” Burke says, urging people to discuss decisions such as these with their peers and co-workers. She says that it is the conversations that really help spread the message, and it is Uhuru’s goal to help initiate these conversations.