Academic claims unfounded

In response to Brad Salmen’s article, “Four things your Macalister professors will never tell you,” (Opinion, Nov 9) I would like to identify several problems. Salmen’s fourth point concerned the “real” state of our planet according to Danish social scientist Bjorn Lomborg. Lomborg disagrees with environmental “doomsayers” who believe that we are destroying our environment with unsustainable practices. Salmen adds, “Skeptically I doubt Lomborg’s book will be assigned reading in any environmental studies class.”

To begin with, the premise of the entire article is that as Macalister students, we must be critical of what our “progressive liberal” professors feed us. Therefore, I was surprised when I noticed that Salmen fails to follow his own suggestion while discussing Lomborg’s book. Salmen, though sometimes critical when discussing other issues such as gender and crime, completely fails to examine Lomborg’s argument in the same manner. Simply because Lomborg presents a position that conflicts with a commonly held view does not mean his argument is valid. I would also like to point out that Lomborg was assigned reading for my Globalization and Environment class (cross-listed in the International Studies and Environmental Studies departments, taught by Brett Smith) this semester. We identified several fallacies in Lomborg’s ideas, such as the fact that he relies mostly on statistical evidence and then fails to explain it. Although Lomborg downplays the human impact on our planet, even he admits that it has been significant. Not surprisingly, Lomborg has become a poster boy for right-wing politicians who wish to eliminate environmental regulations in order to prevent restrictions on large, heavily polluting corporations. I hope Salmen understands who he is supporting when he adopts this argument, and what implications it has for our future. I understand Salmen wants to prevent spin-feeding of material by professors to students, but his article often fails to deliver because it is unfair and clearly not well researched. I also wonder whether his slightly pretentious tone results from his status as an all-knowing senior. I hope he understands that everyone here on campus isn’t as ignorant as he thinks.

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I want to reply to the false statements and malicious innuendos made by Mr. Brad Salmen (Opinion, Nov. 9) regarding the Environmental Studies Program at Macalister College.

In his article, Mr. Salmen writes that