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Note Book

A flap has developed over a case at the University of Pennsylvania in which a freshman who called a group of black female students "water buffalo" is being accused of racial harassment.

The freshman, Eden Jacobowitz, said the charge was an attempt to create a racial incident where there was none. Mr. Jacobowitz said he had yelled at the women because they were making noise outside his high-rise dorm at midnight and he was working on a paper. "It was the furthest thing from my mind to call them anything racial," he said.

Other dormitory residents shouted racial slurs, but they could not be identified by police. Mr. Jacobowitz came forward and acknowledged both that he had yelled and that he had known the women were black. His adviser, history professor Alan Charles Kors, an outspoken defender of free speech on campus, said he plans to have several black faculty members testify that "water buffalo" is not a racial slur.

In an editorial last week, *The Wall Street Journal* called the case an example of political correctness at its most absurd. A Penn spokeswoman said that a hearing scheduled for last week on the racial-harassment charge had been postponed because the black students' adviser could not attend.

There has been speculation on the campus that the case was delayed because Penn president Sheldon Hackney is awaiting confirmation as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Mr. Hackney did not comment. But, in a letter to the *Journal*, he said Penn was "unwavering" in its commitment to free speech, but that the judicial process "must be allowed to run its course."