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The Daily Tar Heel

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Closing the state's intellectual borders

Tuition to attend UNC will increase dramatically if the General Assembly implements a performance audit subcommittee's recommendations, but students shouldn't respond with a knee jerk. At least not yet.

The subcommittee has recommended raising in-state tuition from about 10.5 percent of the cost of education to about one-quarter the cost. It also has suggested increasing graduate students' tuition by 50 percent and charging out-of-state students the full cost of their education (about \$8,800 per year).

The suggestions for graduate and out-of-state students are excessive and would denigrate UNC's national attractiveness to top students across the country. The General Assembly must not forget that many graduate students attend the University to learn, teach and research, and many remain living here for years after earning their degrees (thus benefiting both the economy and social stability of the entire state).

Nevertheless, the subcommittee did show some sense in its recommendations that demonstrate a step forward for the University: Consultants said additional revenue generated by the tuition increases should return to the UNC-system schools for libraries, financial aid and faculty salaries — three of the most needy areas in the system.

It's crucial, though, that the tuition revenues stay

at home. For example, a tuition increase at UNC-Chapel Hill should benefit only the libraries in Chapel Hill. It would be irresponsible for the General Assembly to mandate that students attending one of the nation's premier state schools should pay more tuition to fund a library in Elizabeth City or Boone.

State officials are justified in wanting to raise in-state tuition, but they should keep it low.

As for out-of-state tuition, lawmakers should use restraint, or the nation's best students will choose to attend other, more affordable schools (thus ending the state's opportunity to benefit from their talents).

Graduate-student tuition also should remain as low as possible. Many graduate students just barely make more than the limit to qualify for food stamps, and some can't afford health care. As it is, UNC is losing qualified graduate students to other top schools that can afford to give them a better education.

It is commendable and altogether proper that revenues from a tuition increase should return to the respective universities. The legislature must follow this course if it raises tuitions. But the possibility is all too real that Raleigh lawmakers might yield to the temptation of depositing students' money in the General Fund rather than the universities' coffers. Such a lamentable decision wouldn't solve the state's budget woes and would keep top-notch students at arms length year after year.

BCC: Be all you can be

With the declaration that "I support a free-standing black cultural center," Chancellor Paul Hardin conceded victory to the students struggling for a new BCC. Hardin relented, and supporters celebrated.

But that victory will remain only a symbolic one until the new BCC takes the shape of bricks and mortar. It will remain only a shallow one until the new BCC fulfills its mission of service to future students.

The administrators, students and faculty charged with developing a BCC blueprint are the architects of this mission. By deciding what to include and what to exclude, they will shape the purpose and direction of the new center.

They sit now around an informal negotiating table, searching for the crucial components that will contribute to the success of the new BCC. Waiting eagerly on the sidelines are angry alumni and cynical students who fear that the proposed plans will be for little more than a black student union.

But the new BCC has the potential to be much more. With careful planning, UNC could boast a top-caliber research facility dedicated to the exploration and study of black culture.

This campus, this state and this country are in desperate need of a comprehensive institute for African-American studies. For too long, black culture and contributions have inspired more rhetoric than recognition. The new BCC could focus the attention of all students on black accomplishments, black

leaders and the wealth of knowledge inadequately dubbed black culture.

To do this, the new building must create a supportive umbrella for a variety of endeavors specifically focused on the importance of black issues. Community services, student support and academic excellence could be weaved together to foster the development of a premier facility.

The new center should house a paramount research library, a sizable showcase for African art and the core of the curriculum in African and Afro-American studies.

But personal rivalries and professional concerns have prevented the union of the curriculum and the BCC.

Without a doubt, legitimate problems need to be addressed before entering into any marriage. Preserving the autonomy of both the academic curriculum and the community services is certainly important but shouldn't serve as a barrier to their mutual support of a common interest.

Faculty, students and administrators could serve together on a BCC Advisory Board and jointly administer the functions of the center. No one aspect needs to be subjugated to the will of another.

Together, the students and the curriculum can offer the promise of a paramount research facility that will contribute to the pursuit of black history and heritage. We can only hope to receive an invitation to the wedding reception.

Tobacco myths go up in smoke

The Environmental Protection Agency is crusading to extinguish smokers' prerogative to light up in public.

The EPA has released results from its most recent studies of the effects of environmental tobacco smoke that confirmed what many experts and non-experts knew all along — second-hand smoke is not only smelly and gag-inducing, it is a serious health hazard to everyone, especially children.

The EPA estimates that each year, 3,000 people die of lung cancer caused by environmental tobacco smoke, or second-hand smoke. This classifies second-hand smoke as a human carcinogen, in the same group with benzene, asbestos and radon. No one would dispute banning the discharging of those chemicals in public.

Regulation is required at this juncture to eliminate

the so-called "right" of smokers to pollute the air in public places. Many cities across the United States, including Raleigh, have begun limiting or forbidding smoking in restaurants, government buildings and businesses. This trend should gather momentum and clean air everywhere.

The old civil liberty argument that smokers have used for years has gone up in puffs of smoke. The majority of Americans do not smoke, and they have the right to breathe clean, non-carcinogenic air and to stay healthy.

Smokers only should have the right to smoke where they will not damage the health of the people around them — in their homes (away from children) and outside.

It is time for America to step up efforts to stomp out hazardous environmental tobacco smoke.



Hope for the future among unused resumés

WASHINGTON—My feet were killing me.

I looked down at my brand new wing tips as my taxi pulled away from the curb. Two days of pounding the pavement had already left their mark. The once shiny black shoes were now scarred on the toes.

"My dad always did tell me to pick up my feet when I walk," I said, forgetting for the moment that I wasn't alone.

The driver just stared at me through the rearview mirror. "Oh great," I thought. "Now he thinks I'm a loon."

"Can you take me to 1120 Vermont?" I asked, trying to salvage some dignity.

The driver nodded, and we sped off through the frantic streets of Washington, D.C.

I wasn't sure of the address, but I didn't really care. It might as well have been the bottom of the Potomac River for the luck I'd been having. I had made 30 copies of my resume at Kinko's the day before, anticipating a chance to give out all of them.

The only offer I'd gotten so far was from a female prostitute on the Metro. Ah, the irony of it all.

Now I was off on one last wild-goose chase before I hit the road for Chapel Hill. I had just left a reception for Mel Watt and Eva Clayton, the two House representatives from our state's newly created districts. I was there in hopes of getting a chance to speak with them about my "qualifications."

What I got was a bad case of indigestion from too many Diet Cokes and meatballs.

I did, however, meet one young guy who seemed to offer a ray of hope. He had known Watt's son at Yale, and both were now working for the Clinton transition team. He said he would show me around transition headquarters if I met him there in 30 minutes.

It was worth a shot.

So after a harrowing jaunt the wrong way up a one-way street, my cab finally pulled onto Vermont and up to an 11-story building. I paid the driver — probably tipping him too much — and stepped out onto the busy sidewalk.

This was definitely the place.

I followed a group of young people inside, acting as if I knew exactly where

I was going. Of course, I failed to notice that they all had magnetic key cards hanging on chains from their lapels. Undaunted, I stepped onto elevator with them.

No problem so far.

I couldn't believe the size of this place! I don't know why I had expected to find a tiny, crammed office at 1120 Vermont, but I had. I guess I hadn't really thought about the fact that Clinton's transition team was really a gigantic bureaucracy in the making. After all, his transition team would — in just two short weeks — be governing one of the largest nations in the world. Wow.

I picked a floor at random to make my exit. The Yale grad had said that he worked in domestic policy and that I could meet him there. So when a rather large security guard glowered at me from behind his desk and a metal detector, I cleared my throat and asked meekly for directions.

"Well, domestic is on eleven," he barked, "but you'll have to report to the visitor's center first. Visitors are not permitted without an escort."

Luckily for me, the visitor's center was also on eleven, so I slinked back onto the elevator, praying for the doors to close quickly. When I got to the visitor's center, a bored-looking attendant asked me who I was there to see. That's when I realized I probably wasn't cut out to be a politician.

You see, I couldn't remember the Yale guy's last name.

"It's William ... something," I said, embarrassed. "He's a Yale grad."

She stared blankly at me.

"A tall, sharp-looking black guy," I elaborated. "He works on this floor in domestic." She continued to stare.

"Do you know how many Williams we have working here?" she asked, irritated. "Do you know how many Yale graduates we have working here? Do



Doug Ferguson
To A Different Beat

you know how many black men we have working here?"

Every question made me shrink two sizes. "I think you'll have to remember his last name," she said.

"It begins with a B," I guessed. "Is there a William B ... something working here?" "Nice try," she said.

I thought about waiting outside the elevator to see if William hadn't arrived yet, but I thought I wouldn't test her patience. Dejected, I took the elevator down to the street.

As I walked out into the evening chill, I craned my neck to look up at the top of that tall building. I hadn't gotten the chance to meet the movers and shakers of our nation's next administration. I hadn't gotten the chance to put in a good word for myself and to beg for a job. But for some reason, I was still excited.

Lights from inside that tall building spoke of people working late into the night, planning our nation's future. Inside, the countless changes promised in campaign speeches were being tested out on blackboards and personal computers. Who knows? Maybe even President-elect Clinton was in there somewhere, chomping on a Twinkie and talking on the phone.

And to think, I was there to see some of it taking place. Right there in front of me, our new nation was taking shape.

Even if I couldn't be a part of it all, I didn't leave 1120 Vermont feeling too badly. As I trudged off to the nearest Metro station, butterflies danced in my stomach. And as the train shuttled me toward Connecticut Avenue and my waiting car, I wondered what the next four years would bring.

After all, I barely remember Carter, and he's the last Democratic president we've had. I'm a child of Reaganomics; my attitudes have been shaped by 12 years of Republican rule. Perhaps that's why the idea of change is both frightening and exciting for me.

But, you know, I really think I'm ready for something new. I think this nation is. And on Jan. 20, I believe we'll get it.

Doug Ferguson is a senior journalism major from Charlotte.

READERS' FORUM

DTH's liberal coverage fails majority of students

To the editor:

Reading the DTH today, we were quite surprised by the letter from Mr. Bart Willis ("DTH overdoes it with homosexual coverage" Dec. 7). We were shocked that someone had finally realized the need to speak up against the homosexual coverage by the DTH and that the DTH printed the letter. These articles do not drive people to talk about the plight of homosexuals at Carolina. Rather, they drive us to wonder what are the purposes of these articles and is the DTH really accomplishing them.

The large percentage of these articles seem to be based on two ideals. The first is the continuation of forced liberal ideas on a majority that is receptive and more accepting than any other college campus to this rhetoric (up to a point). The second is the exploitation of incidents that do not involve a majority of the student body for the purpose of creating an atmosphere that oppresses the open expression of dissenting opinions.

We believed that the college atmosphere should promote the open exchange of ideas. This is not what we have experienced in our years at Chapel Hill. Instead we have found a majority of the students are forced to feel guilty for not sympathizing with every cause the DTH feels imperative. We are tired of feeling guilty every time we pick up this "politically correct" publication and do not agree with its rhetoric.

One would think that everyone at UNC-CH was concerned with the homosexual lifestyle. For the most part, the subject of homosexuality is championed by a very small percentage of the student body. The rest of us are forced to read about the trials and tribulations of Mr. Doug Ferguson and his life as a homosexual. His personal life really does not appeal to us, nor does it appeal to any of the people with whom we have

spoken. If Mr. Ferguson would talk about things that would help us sympathize with homosexuals and their plights, then maybe an occasional column dealing with specific issues, such as legislation, would be of help. However, we tire of reading about his social life. If we wanted to hear about someone's problems, we'd read Dear Abby.

In closing, we are tired of having the money from our student fees and tuition going towards the funding of a paper that covers mostly liberal causes prevalent to the day including homosexuals' problems. The DTH needs to recognize that there are 20,000 students on this campus, and a majority, albeit silent, wants to read about more relevant topics such as the budget problems, solutions to these problems and the rebound of the economy under Bush.

MORGAN T. FOSTER
Junior
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Senior
Business Administration

Editor's note: Currently, student fees comprise less than 1 percent of the DTH's budget. This is the last semester the DTH will receive any student fees.

Diversity in newspaper opens closed minds

To the editor:

I am writing this letter in response to Jennifer Durham's "Whining Columnist" letter (Dec. 9). I am disgusted with her lack of understanding and her close-mindedness. She says Doug Ferguson "advocates public responsibility for a private problem." Wake up Jen — homophobia is everyone's problem. Every form of ignorant, xenophobic behavior and thinking breeds hatred and misunderstanding in our society as well as in other countries. It is unfortu-

nate that we must often wait to witness this discrimination and unreasonable hatred of "other" in its extreme (skinheads in Germany, ethnic intolerance in Yugoslavia, etc.) before we decide to take some responsibility in forming a solution to the problem.

Complaints like yours are heard about any type of protest of harassment, whether about racism, homophobia or sexism — only showing just how reluctant and unwilling people are to try to understand and sympathize with others' experiences.

I appreciate Doug's openness in his personal accounts of problems faced by homosexuals. They are beneficial and necessary to increase awareness for everyone. And let's get one thing straight: I doubt Doug cares whether or not you "condone" his sexual orientation. He does not need your permission or anyone else's to be a homosexual. Your tolerance and acceptance might be nice, though. But as an individual and a columnist he has the right to write and express his views in any way that he damn well pleases — or haven't you learned that yet in the journalism school?

JENNIFER HANNER
Senior
Chemistry

Letters policy

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticisms. We attempt to print as many letters to the editor as space permits. When writing letters, please follow these guidelines:

- Letters should be limited to 400 words.
- All letters must be typed and double-spaced.
- Include your year in school, major, phone number and hometown.
- The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity.

The Daily Tar Heel

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Distribution and Printing: Village Printing Company.

The Daily Tar Heel is published by the DTH Publishing Corp., a non-profit North Carolina corporation, Monday-Friday, according to the University calendar.

Callers with questions about billing or display advertising should dial 962-1163 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Classified ads can be reached at 962-0252. Editorial questions should be directed to 962-0245/0246.

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