

Students Should Have Choice in Education, Not State-Run Monopoly

We all know that poor, inner-city children from struggling single-parent homes are less likely to graduate from high school, go to college or get a high-paying job.

Does our school system try to level the playing field and give these children a chance? No. They are forced to attend the schools with the lowest academic standards and the most violence.

Yes, these students do learn some things from the public schools — they learn to fear other people; they learn that they are not valued; and they learn they are stupid. Poor students are not given the options that more well-to-do children enjoy, such as moving to a better school district or attending a private or parochial school. They are stuck in a large, inhumane bureaucratic system that breeds angry, resentful individuals and criminals.

The state monopoly on education must stop. All children, regardless of family income, should be given the opportunity to attend the school that best serves them. Students are individuals and are best served by a school that suits them, not by a school that tries to form them into a preconceived shape. Some students do better in a highly-structured environment, some need more freedom. Parents should be free to choose the school that best fits their child.

A system of vouchers would transfer the power from the bureaucrats to the parents, who truly care about their children. Such a system could be state-regulated to ensure that children weren't being mistreated and were learning something. Schools could be required to accept any student who applied, for example. Test results could be made public so that parents could be aware of how various schools were performing.

Even businesses have some regulation and inspection. But excessive regulation could hamper schools' efforts to serve their students.

The Brookings Institution studied American schools and determined that such a choice system would be more efficient. The new book, "Reinventing Government," also recommends school vouchers as a means of improving service and reducing waste. Bureaucracies are inevitably wasteful, and what's worse in the case of schools is that they tend to be cold and uncaring. Children need a supportive environment where they feel safe.

Children also need consistency. In public schools, if a student has six different teachers during the day, he has to deal with six different sets of rules and educational philosophies. With such a bewildering variety of rules and procedures, students feel overwhelmed and confused. Independent schools usually have a consistent philosophy, which helps the students to better understand the boundaries and procedures.

Since the parents will have chosen the school based on its philosophy, there will be more parental support of education, a crucial factor in school success. If a student was having trouble in a particular school, the parent could switch the student to another school where the child might be better served. A child might have trouble in one school, but thrive in a school with a different approach.

Teachers also need a variety of schools to choose from because not all teachers can handle the bureaucratic system. Some school systems, such as Wake County's, do offer magnet schools; however, these

are just different parts of the same bureaucratic system with the same regulations and leadership.

Excellent public schools are not rewarded for their efforts, nor are poor schools given incentives to improve. The only incentive is to avoid making waves or offending anyone.

In a voucher system, schools would be accountable to parents for results, and schools would be encouraged to perform in order to increase their enrollment and get more funding. If a school was experiencing success with a particular approach, its competitors would have an incentive to try it also. There now is no such incentive. There is a certain "bureaucratic momentum effect," which makes it difficult to change things. Administrative expenses and waste would be reduced, so more of the funds would go into programs that directly affect students. The state education department would be the first thing to go, freeing up more money for the schools.

Europeans, who have choice systems, are amazed that America has a "Soviet-style system." Even though the U.S. elementary and secondary school systems lag behind the rest of the developed world, the American system of higher education, which is based on choice, is world-class.

The problems in the public schools are a direct result of the bureaucratic system that organizes them. What's needed is a systemic change, not a new state mandate. Isn't it about time we ended the state monopoly on education and gave all students a choice that suits their needs?

Ron Lugbill is a student in the School of Education's mid-career teacher training program.

RON LUGBILL
GUEST COLUMNIST



Requesting Police Reports Won't Curb Campus Crime

TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to address an issue which you raised in your editorial "A New Note from Home" regarding police profiles. The Daily Tar Heel has defended the use of police reports as part of the admissions procedure, presumably to have a more peaceable campus.

In your balanced treatment of the issue you did admit there were dangers. First, the punishment does not fit the crime. If someone commits a crime and pays society for what he or she did the criminal should no longer have to shoulder a burden. It labels the person as a permanent criminal, something I think is unfair, especially for juvenile crimes. Prevention is appropriate. Trying to predict who will be a criminal crosses the line, in my opinion, into Big Brotherism.

You recognize these dangers in the editorial but then it seems that the argument goes, "There are dangers; let's hope there will not be abuse." This seems like wishful thinking. What is to stop an admissions committee, which is not accountable to the public, from using police reports inappropriately?

Besides, are not the most able criminals the ones that have not yet been caught? Rape, for example, is frequently not prosecuted. Rape might never show up on a record at all. No police report will help there.

In conclusion, I do not believe that requesting police reports on college applicants will reduce crime, nor will it help anyone predict who will be the next criminal. Asking for police reports on college applicants is nothing more than a hassle.

Michael Tuchman
GRADUATE STUDENT
MATH

Visitation Policy Does Not Address Important Issues

TO THE EDITOR:

Break out a fresh pack of condoms! It's time to celebrate. As of Tuesday night, six dormitories have passed, without contest, a 24-hour visitation policy. That's right, if you reside in Aycock, Carmichael, Craige, Kenan, Mangum or Teague, you and your lover can have unlimited sex for up to 48 hours without fear of breaking any rules, the only provision being that you respect the rights of your roommate.

So why does that bother me? After all, it has been going on for years. Maybe my problem is that I am trapped in the past with Cleaver family ideals. Yet, in spite of my narrow-mindedness, I cannot believe that the only concern expressed by the directors of these dorms had to do with

infringing upon the rights of the roommate.

Are there not other issues to consider? I think there are; however, Jim Ullman, director for Avery, Parker, and Teague, "think(s) everything will be fine with the new policy," and Dan Watts, director for Whitehead and Carmichael, is "very enthusiastic and hope(s) the pilot project will work out." How exactly will it be determined if the policy is working or not? Will it take a couple of acquaintance rapes or an increase in HIV contractions? It is impossible to predict.

Leslie Sadler, director for Spencer-Triad, had her own intelligent comment to make about the new policy. She said, "It will be very healthy for our residents." Hmm. In what way exactly is this policy going to be healthy for students? Sexual promiscuity has negative physical, emotional, relational and spiritual repercussions, but perhaps that did not deem as a legitimate concern. I am so amazed at the hypocrisy of this institution. Last year a 24-hour lock-up of dorms was issued to protect students from rape and crime, and now a 24-hour visitation policy is implemented for the "health" of the student.

Why is it so difficult for us to make the connection between the increase of rape, teenage pregnancy and STD's (AIDS) with the onslaught of rampant sexual behavior. If the only reply to my questions is the cliché that "students are going to do it anyway," then reconsider because that is a weak argument. I feel like we can do better than follow the sheep to the slaughter.

Our hands are not washed of this decision yet.

Julie Stafford
JUNIOR
MIDDLE GRADES EDUCATION

Readers Should Tolerate Differing Views, Columns

TO THE EDITOR:

Question: In this age of modern enlightenment, do the heightened voices of the minorities take complete precedence over the often-stifled voice of the majority?

They do, according to Carolina Semper's letter "Readers Need to Inform DTH, Faires Who Everyperson Is" (Sept. 21), which implies that the silent majority should remain always and forever silent.

Obviously, Faires' column "Everyman" is not prize-winning stuff (nor is it meant to be). I believe it is meant to be taken a little more light-heartedly. Some of his comments and opinions, if analyzed by a 30-member panel staffed by members of all races, sexes and political, sexual and mental persuasions (as would be appropriate in this age of P.C.), might be deemed incorrect or inappropriate.

But precision and accuracy is not the purpose of the weekly columns.



READERS' FORUM

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticism. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 400 words and must be typed, double-spaced, dated and signed by no more than two people. Students should include their year, major and phone number. Faculty and staff should include their title, department and phone number. The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity.

If it was a prerequisite for the columns' contents to never offend or insult, we would have some quite boring reading material (and I would be forced to listen during slow lectures rather than read the paper).

In last year's DTH, there were several columns that had extreme potential to offend and insult.

Alisa DeMao's column about the plight of an oppressed feminist in today's testosterone-driven world insulted or offended me in some way every week.

Doug Ferguson's column about the plight of an oppressed homosexual in today's heterosexual-driven world offended or disgusted me in some way every week.

I read them every week because they expressed opinions different than my own. I did not agree with either of their mindsets, but I did not have to agree. I may have learned something, though, and may have come to better understand why they think the way they do.

Through this, I may have developed more tolerance for others and their ideas different than my own. Had I simply sloughed off their columns, insulted them and labeled them as useless and radical, I would have gained nothing, and only become more entrenched in ignorance.

This rule of measurement must apply to all columns. Faires' column is the expression of views and opinions of a white, Christian, southern male of European descent. There are a lot of people on this campus who are similar to him in some way or another, probably more than we realize, because usually what we hear or read are the voices of minorities and special interest groups.

I am sure Faires offends a certain percentage of the population here at UNC. I am sure every columnist offends a certain percentage of the population here at UNC.

However, by reading his column, the "offender" might gain some insight about the "offender," and that will only help us relate better as different individuals.

On a final note, one word of advice: Never take a man wearing a "Goofy" cap

so seriously that your blood pressure goes up.

James K. Frost
SECOND YEAR
MEDICINE

Everyone Entitled to Their Own, Diverse Opinions

TO THE EDITOR:

I have one word for Carolina Semper — diversity ("Readers Need to Inform DTH, Faires Who Everyperson Is," Sept. 21). Diversity is the key to our education; if we do not learn all aspects of others' thoughts, then we do not truly receive an education.

You speak of how we (assuming you mean the whole campus) need to show the DTH who EVERYMAN is. Well, I attend this great university and I happen to agree with what Faires has to say. Does that make me a resident of an earlier century? I think not: It simply makes me a person with an opinion. Yet, because my opinion does not agree with yours, I feel that you believe it is not a valid one.

This argument brings us once again to the question of education. There is constantly talk of a multicultural education on this campus and in this town. Remembering what I learned in high school (I may be wrong though), does "multi" not mean many? Therefore, is not the constant flow of dialogue among people of different views and values a form of multicultural education? To learn what another has to say, we as a university must listen to what is being said. I am afraid that in today's environment, this type of dialogue is no longer acceptable.

The thought police have taken over the campuses of our country. If you do not agree with the vocal liberals, then you are wrong, outdated or in need of re-education (just to bring up a few of the descriptions of the conservative white male). If I say that homosexuality is unacceptable and should not be tolerated, I immediately am labeled "homophobe."

If I say that Clinton's health care package is going to destroy the economy of the South, of North Carolina in particular, I am labeled a backward hick who has no clue of what is going on in the world.

What can be gained by this labeling? You refuse to listen to what I have to say and therefore refuse to appreciate what I have to say. I will then label you and nothing is gained.

You, Ms. Semper, speak of the racial unrest on this campus and blame Mr. Faires and the DTH editorial board for it. Look in the mirror. You are as much to blame for the problems facing our university. It takes two to tango, not just one opinionated columnist.

You speak of the need to communicate. It is rather difficult to communicate to an unwieldy person as yourself. If you refuse Mr. Faires's right to make his opinion known because you do not agree with what he has to say, then you are showing that you in fact do not want communication, but thought that is dominated by a few like yourself. Speech laws have been tried at many other campuses and fail because they end up hurting more than helping.

If the proof of repeated attempts and failures is not enough for you, then I advise you to go back to Dr. King's speech "I Have a Dream." He speaks not of attempts to force people to hold their opinions to

themselves, but to learn so that our children may mature in a colorblind world. That type of education comes not from censorship, but open dialogue: something you are obviously against.

Morgan Foster
SENIOR
ECONOMICS/POLITICAL SCIENCE

Swofford Should Slate UNC-ECU Gridiron Match

TO THE EDITOR:

Whenever anyone asks UNC athletic director John Swofford why the Tar Heels never face East Carolina in football, he always points to a policy set up by the school's athletic council in the late 1970s that prohibits the football and basketball teams from playing any non-ACC schools from within the state. Swofford says this policy was made to give a more geographical flavor to UNC's schedule and to avoid having to make a decision about which in-state rivals to play.

In football, this argument no longer holds any water. ECU is the only non-ACC Division I-A school in the state. Because the NCAA requires that schools win six games against Division I-A competition in order to be eligible for a bowl game, the Tar Heels would not schedule any teams in the state other than ECU, anyway. The choice of which, if any, in-state teams to play is already made. Scheduling the Pirates, even if only once every three years or so, would still allow the Tar Heels at least two games per year to get the "geographical flavor" to which Swofford referred.

I haven't done any scientific research on this matter, but I'm willing to bet that more Tar Heel fans would rather see a matchup with ECU than with Ohio U., Navy or Cincinnati. I also feel fairly certain that the fans and players over in Greenville would delight in an opportunity to face the hated Tar Heels. The geographic rivalry gives the matchup a higher probability of being aired on television (\$\$\$) than ones with some of UNC's rinky-dink opponents of recent years.

Armed with this knowledge, Swofford should get on the phone and schedule ECU at the next available date, which is either sometime in the late 1990s or early 2000s. Ironically, the in-state policy was made during a stretch in which East Carolina football was either beating or holding its own against UNC. Swofford and the athletic council need to reveal some better reasons why ECU is never scheduled, or else they should admit that this "policy" is a polite way of saying UNC is afraid to take on ECU.

David J. Kurstas
CLASS OF 1993

Marriott Policy Unfair To Pizza Delivery Drivers

TO THE EDITOR:

From Frat Court to South Campus, it seems pizza is Chapel Hill's favorite food. Hundreds of students ordering every day keep the UNC pizza delivery industry booming, and since the advent of the meal card, it has never been more convenient to get hot delicious food delivered right to your door.

Marriott Corporation currently oversees both on-campus dining services and the meal card system used for pizza delivery. In return for the privilege of membership in the meal card system, Marriott takes a whopping 21 percent of all meal card pizza sales. Fair? Perhaps. However, through some bizarre twist of logic, Marriott has included in its contract a claim of 21 percent on all delivery drivers' tips as well.

Delivery drivers are hard-working individuals, many of whom are UNC students struggling to make enough cash to get by. We work in a fast-paced, stressful environment until two or three in the morning, relying heavily on customers' generosity for a large portion of our income. Losing over a fifth of a night's tips obviously puts a significant dent in drivers' take-home

pay. Who has the greater need for this 21 percent? It's petty cash to a mammoth corporation like Marriott. It's books, food, and gas in the car to us.

The owners and managers of the three aforementioned pizza places probably would agree that their contract with Marriott is equitable, but taxing service employees, especially at such an inordinate rate, is unheard of in any other industry — as well as downright greedy. VISA, MasterCard, and American Express each take 2 to 3 percent of your bill when you dine out, but stop short of actually confiscating any portion of your server's tip.

We encourage Marriott to review this situation and propose new ideas. If Marriott truly seeks to have a quality relationship with the University community from which it generates a large amount of revenue, then we expect to see a change in its policy.

Further, we invite meal card pizza customers to bypass Marriott's greed by tipping the drivers in cash. This puts less of your money into corporate America's deep pockets, which already contain an unfair majority of this country's wealth.

Matthew R. Hoffman
SENIOR
BUSINESS

Garrick T. Skalski
JUNIOR
BIOLOGY

Top 10 Reasons Why State Fans Left Early Saturday

TO THE EDITOR:

Just a little revenge humor I thought I'd share.

Top 10 Reasons Why State Fans Left the Game Early Saturday:

- 10) My cow was double-parked, and I didn't want a ticket.
- 9) There was a game? I thought the Tar Heels were showing off.
- 8) I ran out of beer and was getting sober.
- 7) I had to pick up some parts for my John Deere.
- 6) My date was hungry, so I took him out to graze.
- 5) I wanted to have a talk with those guys at the Technician who said we'd win.
- 4) I wanted to get a head start praying for a good basketball season.
- 3) Those people wearing blue were giving me a headache.
- 2) I wanted to be back in time for the season premiere of "Star Trek."
- 1) 35-14! You figure it out.

Mike Costantino
FRESHMAN
EDUCATION

Act of Generosity Sets Good Example for Others

TO THE EDITOR:

Here is quite a remarkable story: On Sept. 14, I was in the Student Union waiting in line to buy a doughnut. Upon getting to the front of the line and having my bill rung up, I discovered that I had left my I.D. in my room and I had no cash to pay for the doughnut.

As I began to stumble upon the words to tell the cashier, a young lady across from me offered to pay for the doughnut with her meal card. I had never seen this person before in my life, and I was astonished to say the least. When she was finished with her purchase, I offered to pay her back.

She politely refused, saying that the best way for me to pay her back would be to do the same for someone else in that situation. I asked her for her name, but she wouldn't tell me because she thought it was another attempt to try and pay her back. I thanked her and we went our separate ways.

On the way back to my dorm, though, I couldn't stop thinking about how nice it was of her to do that for me. I am very grateful for generosity, and I know that I'll return the favor in the future to anyone who's in that situation thanks to her. Thank you, whoever you are, and God bless you.

David Sherrill
SOPHOMORE

