

BOARD EDITORIALS

STUDENT WATCHDOGS

The Student Fee Audit Committee, which is just beginning its work, must continue to ensure that groups use student money responsibly.

UNC-Chapel Hill administrators and student leaders have started to think about potential tuition scenarios for the next academic year. At the same time, they are looking at another collection of costs — student fees.

A proposal to add \$26 to the \$312 health service fee is also in the works, and admissions application fees might be raised by \$10 to \$70.

With such potential fee increases on the table, students might wonder how their money is being used, who decides to raise fees and what type of process is in place to examine the need for increases. That's where the Student Fee Audit Committee comes in.

The body takes a hard look at the proposed budgets of campus organizations in an effort to limit costs while guaranteeing that students' money is coming back to serve them in the utmost capacity.

The audit committee is a powerful tool of student government — one that works toward making it so the student body's money is being spent in the best possible way.

This group has the power to influence the people who make official fee increase recommendations to higher administrative boards, so each version of the committee must take care to be fair, rational and efficient in their work. Members must ensure that budget proposals made by campus organizations are within reason and in the best interests of the student body.

Every student member of the Chancellor's Committee on Student Fees also serves on the audit committee — meaning that a reliable line of communication connecting the two bodies is established before members of either committee begin their discussion of fee increase proposals.

The chancellor's committee is the body that actually makes fee increase proposals, which go before the University's Board of Trustees and then to the UNC-system Board of Governors.

By working in conjunction with the chancellor's committee, the audit committee becomes representative of the input that students have in the fee increase process.

Time is a factor for the audit committee, as the chancellor's committee is set to create concrete proposals by the end of October. And the all-student group should make sure that its priorities are straight in terms of its schedule and the amount of focus it places on each fee. For one, the committee needs to continue the work done by student officers last year to investigate the Counseling and Psychological Services fee, as CAPS recently has been put under the microscope by students and parents.

Student Body Treasurer Natalie Russell, who serves as the committee's chairwoman, said the education and technology fees — which would be raised by \$73 to \$395 under a new proposal — will be discussed when the body meets for the first time Thursday.

Reviewing every student fee dollar before the chancellor's committee forms its final recommendations is no small task. The audit committee has its work cut out for it — so it needs to be both efficient and thorough in examining campus groups' proposed budgets.

This year, students saw their fees increase by \$121. This particular increase seemed like an afterthought compared to the tuition hikes that were passed controversially by the BOT.

Tuition is certainly an important subject to every member of the University community. But student fees, which aren't necessarily being spent in the most fiscally responsible manner, warrant serious consideration as well.

Students should realize that their leaders have a system in place to examine student fee increases — and that administrators aren't acting arbitrarily when they raise the amount of money coming out of the wallets of students and their families.

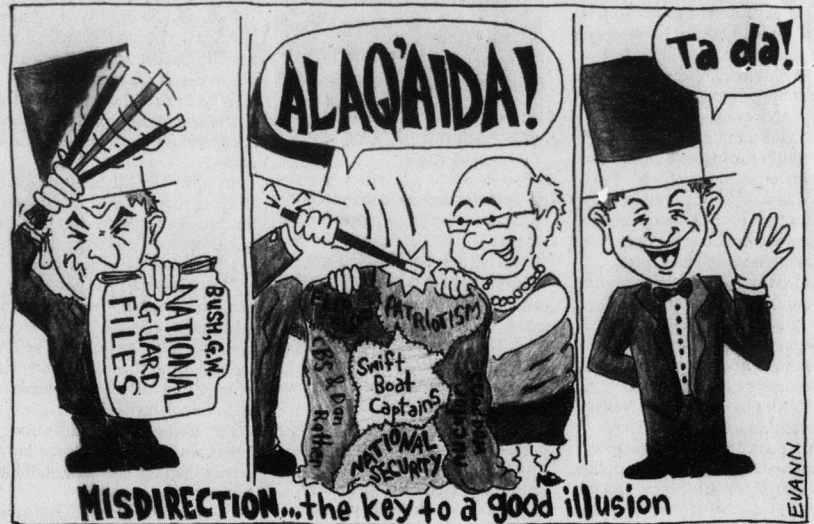
ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"Money is only a tool. It will take you wherever you wish, but it will not replace you as the driver."

AYN RAND, NOVELIST AND PHILOSOPHER

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Evann Strathern, evann@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

You had better call students, because they won't call you

Early in the week, the temperature hovered in the 50-degree range. On Saturday, for the first time since 2001, the blue-swathed masses in Kenan Stadium had a home-game winning streak to celebrate.

By early October, the leaves will start to turn — and when the cold wind finally settles in for good, they will begin to fall. When we open our calendars, we don't have to turn many pages before we come across the word "midterms," circled twice and underlined in red.

I don't think we can deny it anymore: The semester has started.

But there's one big difference between this time this year and this time the year before.

It's cold outside, but if you want to smoke on campus, you'd better bring a coat — because you're not welcome on the balconies of the building in which you live.

The other option is to move down south, because the only residence halls that allow students to smoke in their rooms are Craige and Ehringhaus.

The only reason all of the residence halls aren't completely smoke-free is that the University doesn't have the power to make it so. State law holds that the administration must make a "reasonable effort" to provide residential smoking rooms in proportion to student demand.

How did the Residence Hall Association, with the help of the Department of Housing and Residential Education, come to the brilliant decision to exile smokers?

They polled students living on campus. And I can't tell you what a stupid idea that was.

These people — including



MATT COMPTON
POTENTIAL CROSSWORD SPACE ... WASTED

students elected to represent the interests of everyone living in University housing and administrators whose job it is to accommodate all the students in their charge — should have known better.

They used an online poll sent out by e-mail, and we all receive a string of informational e-mails every day. Of course, only about a third of the people who received the message bothered to reply. By any measure, that's a paltry response.

It's bad business for smokers, but the news is worse for the student body as a whole.

If the powers that be have no qualms about squashing smokers, a minority group, they are showing their hand. They will only pause a moment more before they step on the rest of us. And they'll do it while touting a false mandate — a mandate from students.

In April, students participated in an open forum with Director of Athletics Dick Baddour to discuss the possible placement of permanent commercial advertisements in the Dean Smith Center and Kenan Stadium.

About 50 students showed up, and the opinion of the student body was heard. Judging by the forum alone, "students" apparently support limited use of advertising in those venues.

That's the danger with online

polls and poorly advertised forums — they don't measure anything except the small number of people who read an e-mail or bother to peruse a random flyer.

It's not just smoking or signage. Every year, students bring up parking and tuition as two of the most important issues. Every year that I've been here, we've seen the number of parking spaces on campus go down and the cost of tuition go up.

These are difficult times of dramatic change for the University — even under the best conditions, such changes force students to make sacrifices.

But the terrible, gut-wrenching truth as I see it is that we would have been called upon to make these sacrifices no matter what we said in a poorly attended forum or an ill-advised poll.

A new semester has started — and for the past five years, we have seen student influence on this administration depreciate.

Right now, more often than not, our leaders don't do enough to gauge student opinion or to bring our voice to the administration.

As long as this trend continues, our leaders will be complicit in the steady reduction of our authority. And it's not that they aren't talking to the administration — it's that they aren't taking the time to listen to us.

I cannot say this loudly, clearly or often enough: Our student leaders must do more than they have recently shown themselves willing to do. We don't have a responsibility to come to them. They have a responsibility to come to us.

That's the definition of leadership.

Contact Matt Compton at mattcomp@gmail.com.

THE WRONG PRIORITY

Race relations should be a concern in the town's police department — but a captain's spot shouldn't be set aside for a black candidate.

The Chapel Hill Police Department recently has been criticized for choosing to promote a white male lieutenant to captain despite the availability of two black lieutenants.

If race was, indeed, not the deciding factor in the hiring process, as officials say, then the department is in the right. The candidates' qualifications should have been at the forefront of town officials' minds, and there's little reason to doubt that they were.

Bill Thorpe, a former member of the Chapel Hill Town Council and a local civil rights leader, wrote a letter about the promotion to The Daily Tar Heel last week. In the letter, he took the town to task for not choosing a black officer to make command decisions.

Thorpe wrote on behalf of the Hank Anderson Breakfast Club, a small civil rights group that has been active in local politics. He didn't suggest the creation of any type of quota within the department, but he did comment on the importance of having a black captain on the police force.

The letter decried the promotion of Lt. Brian Curran, who is white, over "two qualified black males and a qualified white female" as a sign of the town "going backwards." The recently vacated captaincy was that of Capt. Bobby Smith, who retired last month. Smith was the department's second black officer to rise to the rank of captain, The (Durham) Herald-Sun reported.

If the town designated the vacant captaincy for an officer of a specific color, it would have been contrary to the goals of those who have worked to improve civil rights.

The concept of equality should be tied to rewarding work for its true value, regardless of one's race. To give a person a job based on his or her color would serve to undermine respect for minority applicants who earn higher-level positions through their own efforts.

But Chapel Hill's department and other police forces in North Carolina should maintain a focus on race relations, as concerns about racial profiling and discrimination have affected officers across the state.

That certainly would be a valid subject for the Hank Anderson Breakfast Club to address. But officials shouldn't tamper with hiring and promotion practices — which show no signs of being marked by racial bias in this instance — nor should they relegate merit to secondary status.

The culture within the police department should be the target of scrutiny. Turning the captaincy into a token position would have little effect on long-term race relations.

There have been no red flags waved to indicate any discrimination in the hiring decision process. The department promoted the aforementioned two black officers and the female officer to lieutenant in October, The Herald-Sun reported. Although Thorpe's letter held that the promotion didn't meet with his preference, it didn't indicate any sort of misconduct on Chapel Hill officials' part.

Curran has 18 years of experience in the department. Chapel Hill police spokeswoman Jane Cousins told The Herald-Sun that he was most recently a supervisory lieutenant in the department's Investigations Division.

Although there's no quantifiable way to judge whether Curran was the best candidate for the job, the facts seem to confirm this stance.

Progress in terms of civil rights should not be measured by how many black captains there are on a police force. Such progress has to do with how people are being treated.

It's evident that Chapel Hill officials did the right thing — they promoted an officer based on his qualifications.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above editorials are the opinions of solely The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board, and were reached after open debate. The board consists of six board members, the editorial page associate editor, the editorial page editor and the DTH editor. The 2004-05 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

READERS' FORUM

Protesting singers weren't respectful of other views

TO THE EDITOR:

As a conservative on campus who firmly believes in hearing every side of the issue before coming to a conclusion and talking through differences in opinion, I was appalled by the Missile Dick Chicks who were featured in a picture in Tuesday's issue of The Daily Tar Heel and who rudely interrupted my dinner in Lenoir Dining Hall on Monday.

My problem wasn't with their incredibly out-of-tune singing or even with their outrageous costumes (which might cause nightmares for me in the future). It was with their total and utter inability simply to state their views and to tell me or anyone else their point of view and factual information behind it.

A handful of people, including me, decided to talk to these women after their performance. As a person who believes in hearing every side of the issue and then making my decision on how I will stand, I wanted to find out more information from them and to give my own point of view. However, I was only greeted with complete sarcasm and the feeling that they did not know anything about the issues aside from their incredibly narrow perception of them.

This is the problem I've found with a lot of liberals on campus.

They have such a narrow view and are so closed-minded that they would not see the truth about an issue even if it was right in front of them.

I'll listen to them. I don't have to agree with them, just as they don't have to agree with me.

I only wish that the same respect I have been willing to give them was returned.

Billy Constangy
Junior
Political science

Campus Y provides service opportunities for students

TO THE EDITOR:

Only one organization on campus has had its own building and has remained there for 96 years. The Campus Y's central physical location is representative of its role at Carolina; with 16 committees and more than 1,500 members committed to making a difference on campus and in the community, it is the largest officially recognized student organization.

This week the Campus Y celebrates Horizon Week and encourages all students to learn more about our projects.

From serving Hunger Lunch to participating in Big Buddy programs, from promoting literacy to improving race relations, we have a service opportunity for you.

Members of the Campus Y will

be in the Pit through Tuesday.

Additionally, the Advocates for Human Rights Committee will sponsor a teach-in about the Sudanese crisis at 7 p.m. Thursday in Gardner 108, and a movie exposing modern-day slavery will be shown Monday at 7 p.m. in Hanes Art Center and will be followed by a discussion.

Whether you arrived at Carolina a month ago or have been a member of the Campus Y for years, we urge you to celebrate and learn more about our organization this week. The Y is a true testament to the passion and commitment that UNC's students share for the pursuit of social justice.

Mary Zimmerman
Junior
Romance languages

Officials seeking input on academic progress analysis

TO THE EDITOR:

Have you ever used the degree audit system, known to many as the analysis of academic progress, at <http://studentcentral.unc.edu> and not been completely satisfied with the results you received?

Well, we can't do anything to help you if you were disappointed in your actual academic progress. But if you would like to help provide input on how the system will look in the future, this letter is for you.

The Office of the University

Registrar, in conjunction with student government, is looking for student input on ways to improve the system with its implementation in the new curriculum.

There will be student input sessions from 8:30 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. today and Friday. Both sessions will be held in room 209 the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History. We hope to see you there!

Brian Phelps
Co-chairman
Academic Affairs Committee

Angelica Matthews
Co-chairwoman
Academic Affairs Committee

News of beheadings is not receiving enough attention

TO THE EDITOR:

On Monday, a new video was posted on the Internet of yet another innocent American hostage being decapitated by a militant group believed to be led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

The number of American soldiers killed in Iraq has surpassed 1,000, and the number of insurgent attacks has increased from 700 in March to 2,700 in August.

To make matters worse, the number of gruesome and inhumane beheadings of innocent hostages has risen as well, making it evident that the increasing violence in Iraq is a pivotal issue

that must be given the utmost attention.

Whether one likes to read about it or not, more and more of our own Americans are being killed in a ruthless and savage manner that must not be ignored.

It is painful to see that a decapitation of an American worker in Iraq does not even make the front page anymore.

This turning point in our society must stimulate one to think of the dangerous repercussions this violent war is having on the way the media and most Americans view the waging of war and the loss of human life.

Can you imagine a society in which trivial news overshadows the gruesome murders of innocent Americans during wartime?

Well, now you can.

Mike Tarrant
Freshman
Political science

TO SUBMIT A LETTER: The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 300 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. Publication is not guaranteed. Bring letters to the DTH office at Suite 2409, Carolina Union, mail them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 or e-mail them to editdesk@unc.edu.

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