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The Daily Tar Heel

88th year of editorial freedom

Student opinion

The charges leveled last week by Student Body President Bob Saunders of a "breakdown in communications" between the Division of Student Affairs and Student Government raises all sorts of questions. Saunders and Executive Assistant Scott Norberg accused Student Affairs, which oversees student services from housing to health, of not "understanding" Student Government's role as the student's advocate. Norberg said Student Affairs did not solicit Student Government opinion on issues affecting students and said the division's staffers frequently contradicted one another. The situation, according to Norberg, cannot get any worse.

This flurry of accusations is impressive, but it is not entirely justified. For instance, Saunders seemed most peeved because he had not been told that Student Affairs was seeking a new adviser for Student Government. Yet one of Saunders' executive assistants, Lee McAllister, said he was informed of the job opening; in this light, the criticisms of poor intra-organizational communication seem less valid. Still, some of Saunders' slings and arrows have found their target. Student Affairs' failure to solicit Student Government opinion is characteristic of a larger administration attitude. In several cases, students' ideas and concerns have been largely ignored as administrative decisions are made.

In the search to find a vice chancellor for University affairs—a post set up specifically to build the minority presence on campus—no attempt was made to get opinion from the Black Student Movement until late in the selection process. Moreover, no black student sat on the search committee. Certainly, the BSM could offer only a narrow endorsement because candidates from outside this campus were being considered, but an outline of the qualities it considered important in a vice chancellor for University affairs should have been obtained early in any such search.

This lack of concern for student opinion by the administration is not malicious and may not be intentional. It is, however, unfair to ignore student ideas about policies that will profoundly affect the way this campus is run. The result can only be poorer decisions and poorer policies, as well as poor relations between the students and the decision-makers.

Back in the old days

Life was a whole lot simpler in the old days. Back then there were platforms that meant something and candidates who delivered on their promises. We did not need polls to tell us who we liked, and low voter turnout wasn't a concern—everyone voted.

In first grade, Billy asked everyone to vote for him because he was a nice guy, and he won.

In fourth grade, Anne pledged that, if elected, she would work hard for longer recesses and no more green peas and fish cakes for lunch—she may not have succeeded but no one ever faulted her for not trying. It never was easy getting the principal to see things our way, but then our class presidents gave their best efforts.

We did not need massive debates between the candidates—believe it or not, we didn't even need the League of Women Voters. We did not need to dicker with statistics, to claim that one candidate had raised taxes by 50 percent in his homeroom or that the other posed a serious threat to the security and peace of the entire fourth grade. All we wanted was more freedom on the playground and chocolate milk along with white at lunch.

National politics were nothing to fret over back then; we did not agonize too much over the choices. If Mom and Dad liked Humphrey, then so did we. Campaign pins were important only for trading purposes, and distinctions like Republicans and Democrats were useful only as names for tag football teams.

But as early as the ninth grade, there were signs that the enthusiasm and simplicity of fourth grade politics were gone. Now, student candidates pledged to get students involved—something that in the old days went without saying. And suddenly, what a candidate said became less important than with whom that candidate was going steady. Fourth grade liberties like overnight camping trips for the class had been stripped away by the old-fashioned nerds in the headmaster's building. They said trips like that were no longer proper, but they only made us suspicious of their motives.

And now, here we are, 1980. There's Ronnie and Jimmy and even Johnny. By the time you read this, one of them will be our leader. But whoever it is, don't count on ice cream instead of chocolate pudding. And don't even hope for longer recesses. Life's not that simple any more.

The Daily Tar Heel

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letters to the editor

Reporter characterized as disrespectful

To the editor:

Professional journalism, in a complex media network whose impact on society is unquestionably large, demands more than obtaining a story regardless of cost. Equally crucial, if not paramount, to obtaining the news item is the practice of basic professional ethics and responsibilities.

In attempting to confirm a recent story regarding selection of a new vice chancellor for the University, such ethics and responsibilities have been clearly and blatantly violated. This incident, however, is demonstrative of the consequences when an "overzealous and inexperienced" reporter from *The Daily Tar Heel* fails to exercise the sound judgment and wisdom requisite to the journalistic profession, as opposed to the superficial thrills and lack of foresight characteristic of the newspaper game.

On Oct. 28, the Dialectic and Philanthropic Literary Societies sponsored a public forum where representatives from the Black Student Movement, the Student Consumer Action Union, *The Daily Tar Heel* and Di-Phi were asked to participate in a question-and-answer session on issues important to their organizations and to the campus in general. All of the organizations, with the exception of *The Daily Tar Heel*, were present on the panel and well-prepared to confront the chancellor with such questions. Well into the program, a reporter from *The Daily Tar Heel* did appear at the back of the Dialectic Chamber, and asked the chancellor if he would like to "step into the hall" to confirm or deny a name which, it was alleged, was that of the vice chancellor nominee.

While the tactic of interrupting a public program by attempting to remove the guest speaker from the room struck me as a little peculiar, I reminded myself that there are probably a few fledgling reporters grappling with delusions of journalistic grandeur. The chancellor apologized that he could neither confirm nor deny any name, for such an action could disrupt the required confirmation procedure of the Board of Governors. This clearly legitimate reasoning was unacceptable to the reporter; superfluous thrills blinded the foresight so crucial to the exercise of professional ethics.

While I am a staunch advocate of a media with a watchful eye, that eye must be trained to view thoroughly and carefully events of public interest, gathering information in a manner consistent with the spirit of respect due each individual and organization with which the reporter is concerned. The performance of the representative from *The Daily Tar Heel* demonstrates the lack of training and respect found in what I am sure is a minority in an otherwise outstanding *Tar Heel* staff.

Daniel McCurdy
Chapel Hill

Editor's note: The DTH reporter scheduled to serve on the panel was locked out of her car and thus unable to attend the forum.

Law protest

To the editor:

This letter is in response to the reporting techniques used in the article, "Job recruiters for oil firm met by protest," (*DTH*, Oct. 31). I believe that journalistic integrity requires that a grammatically incorrect paraphrase, taken out of context, not be surrounded by quotation marks, to wit, "People in the 1970s are apathetic with the rise of disco and pink and green...." I



understand misquotations and statements out of context may inadvertently occur in an impromptu interview such as the one during the protest.

This misquotation suggested that the protest was a nebulous reaction to student apathy and conservatism. To set the record straight, the purpose of the protest was to air a general dissatisfaction with "Big Oil" and its policies. Examples of such policies oppose small scale renewable energy projects and profit gouging. An additional purpose, as I see it, was to make law students realize that legal employment entails a moral choice. The legal system is not the blind arbiter of justice most people envision. The legal staff of a multi-national oil firm is the best money can buy. Until the problem of unequal access to the judicial system due to economics is solved, employment with a corporation of this type will invariably be counter to the "public interest."

Alex Charns
Chapel Hill

Editor's note: The quote cited was both correct and within the context of Charns' comment.

Student Affairs

To the editor:

I am writing this letter in response to the article "SG relations with officials troubled," (*DTH*, Oct. 28). As a student of this University, I believe that this entire article and the accusations made in the article were totally uncalled for and unjustified.

Executive Assistant Scott Norberg said: "Most of what Student Affairs does affects the students, and it is beyond me how—if we don't walk over there, call them up and tell them what we think—they never ask us for it." From this statement, I only suggest that Norberg become more familiar with the Student Affairs Office before he offers any more comments. I personally have completed or had the chance to complete many more surveys or questionnaires distributed by the Student Affairs Office than any distributed by Student Government. The purpose of these surveys is to assist Student Affairs in becoming more aware of the feelings and needs of the students at this University.

Student input is a very valuable asset of both Student Government and the Division of Student Affairs. I agree with

Linda Kelly
Chapel Hill

Editor's note: Kelly is employed as a work-study student by the Division of Student Affairs.

Who's obvious?

To the editor:

David Poole's article "Masters of the obvious are wretched pests," (*DTH*, Nov. 3), neglected to mention the *DTH*'s own masters of the obvious; i.e., columnists whose attempts at humor focus on such perfectly obvious and nauseatingly overworked themes as people who make aggravatingly trite observations.

Surely Poole does not "think that he is the first person in the world who ever thought that" this would be a great idea for a satirical column. Granted, Poole's

uninspired choice of subject matter might have been tolerable, and I would like to emphasize the word "might," had his jabs at these "wretched pests" been at all witty or imaginative. However, his retort to the person who asks him if it is raining outside is, for example, not only totally devoid of wit, but also downright unfunny.

Thus, Poole's indictment of the aggravating masters of the trite observation is a classic example of the kettle calling the pot black. In fact, you cannot get more trite, or more aggravating, than his weekly observations from the turn lane.

Mark McCombs

Y-I Kingswood Apartments

Dorm refunds

To the editor:

For the purpose of clarifying the article "Dorm damage fees refunded..." (*DTH*, Oct. 31) it has been learned that a common area damage fee was assessed residents on their accounts through the cashier's office.

The Department of University Housing billed 4,000 students this year for dorm damages. This number includes those students who were fined for damages inside and outside their dorm rooms. Individuals are responsible for paying those damages inside their rooms. However, those residents who were billed for common area damages outside their rooms may be entitled to a refund.

More importantly, the prospect of a rent increase to compensate for this loss of revenue adds foundation to the reasoning behind placing additional responsibility on RAs, residence hall leaders and residents to find the culprits who commit these acts.

A policy that will effectively bring vandals to grips with the problems they create for all of us would serve them well and, in effect, would protect the students' pocketbooks.

Residents who were billed for common area damages may receive credit through any of these three means: through area directors, the Student Government Action Line or the Housing Department in Carr Building.

Peggy Leight, president
Residence Hall Association

O. Darryl Smith, president
Old East Residence Hall

Equal rights

Women should actively support amendment

By BETH BURRELL

For any of those people questioning the literal wording of the Equal Rights Amendment, it goes like this: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." In other words, women finally would have a constitutional guarantee of legal equality.

Before I understood ERA and what it stood for, I imagined that someday I would have to go to war if it were ratified. And I'm sure many women still believe that that end and a few other emotion-stirring results are all the amendment is really about.

Unfortunately, those who think in such terms have not given the amendment a chance and have not stopped to consider what equal rights would actually mean.

Most believe the statement that "all men are created equal" can be interpreted to mean women too. But in 1776 the founding fathers certainly had no intention of guaranteeing the equality of men and women—women at that time weren't even allowed to vote.

And when women are accused of taking "this Equal Rights thing" too far, look back to the 1960s. If blacks in this country had not felt their civil rights were being violated, and without their dedication and determination, would the Civil Rights Acts have never been passed? Women should be willing to fight for their rights, too.

As author Rita Mae Brown said when she was in Chapel Hill Oct. 8, conservatives like Ronald Reagan are trying to cast women back 40 years by opposing the Equal Rights Amendment. But, regardless of this clearly defined enemy, we cannot run away from the

According to a pamphlet advocating ERA (available at the Carolina Union and put out by the Association for Women Students), "Right now fact that every woman in this country is entitled to

same rights as every man.

women are paid about 20 percent less than men for doing identical work. There are inheritance laws, pension rules and insurance practices that treat men and women differently—often shortchanging women, sometimes shortchanging men."

This pamphlet rightfully points out that the amendment does not just mean equal rights for women—but for men, also. Is it fair for a man when his wife dies to be denied the same protection under Social Security that is available to women when their husbands die?

What is most distressing about the opposition to ERA is the fact that so many women are against it. When I overhear a woman saying, "I understand the Equal Rights Amendment, but I'm not for it," I just want to say "you don't understand it or you would be for it."

Their reaction is emotional; they are afraid they will lose the protection given to them as women. But what they fail to see is that their situation may not guarantee these protections, and they may need the benefits of ERA some day.

If a woman thinks the rest of her life will be taken care of because she'll be married and therefore will have little need for equal rights, then what's going to happen if that husband dies, gets killed, or walks out on her? If she doesn't have the training for a job, and has children to take care of, where will she be then?

Even if she does have a degree and some job training, she may find it difficult to find a solid, well-paying job because of her sex. Maybe then she'll ask herself why a society that promotes equal rights for all mankind oppresses hers and why she has allowed it to continue.

Certainly there have been federal and state laws banning discriminatory practices based on sex, but that does not guarantee there won't be any discrimination. A constitutional amendment will help guarantee full protection under the law, prohibiting businesses—and their managers—from continuing unfair practices.

When a woman my age goes to Carolina for four or more years, obtains a degree, gets a job and see a male classmate as whom she is equally as capable quickly moving up in a business while she stays in the same place, perhaps then she'll wonder why she opposes equal rights for women. Nothing is more demeaning or demoralizing than to see someone who is no more intelligent, capable, or willing to work as you being promoted at faster rate and making more money, simply because he's a man.

"The Equal Rights Amendment is only 50 words long...It doesn't say who should open the door, or drive the family car or wash the dishes. It doesn't reduce the protections that women have now under the law. And it doesn't tell women whether or not they should go to work, or stay home and raise a family, or both. It just says that the government can't ever pass a law that restricts the rights of women—or men." So reads a pamphlet put out by the League of Women Voters.

With the ratification of the amendment, women would gain equal rights, equal access to jobs and equal opportunity in a society that has always given these things to men.

Certainly women have come quite far since they fought for the right to vote in 1920. As businesses are hiring more women, there has been an increase in married couples in which both husband and wife are working, and more women are interested in getting a degree in order to use it rather than just possess it.

Until enough women in this country exert their independence and equality and decide to take full responsibility for their own lives, the Equal Rights Amendment will not become reality. Women—its strongest opponents—are ironically keeping it back.

It only has three more states to go. Thirty-five already have ratified it, and North Carolina should be one of them.

Beth Burrell, a junior journalism and political science major from Charlotte, is a copy editor for *The Daily Tar Heel*.