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The Daily Tar Heel

88th year of editorial freedom

Preregistration: sliding through Carolina

By DAVID POOLE

The pencil hovered just above the paper, poised to be whisked across the page. I held my breath. My adviser was nearly ready to sign his name to give me permission to preregister for the last time at Carolina. He was the last hurdle.

"Hmmm," he said. I began to worry. "So this will fulfill all of the requirements for you?"

"Yes, sir," I replied, hoping he wouldn't realize that the array of classes I was trying to register for was ridiculously slack.

"This looks fine," he beamed, looking up from the computer form. "This is the last time you'll have to go through this hassle, huh?"

"Yes, sir," I said. I say that a lot around my adviser, and anyone else who has me by the throat.

Eight semesters without having to justify why nearly every course I've taken outside my major has the words "Introduction to" in the title. I've tried very hard to avoid all the work I possibly can here, and I'm not ashamed to admit it.

By saying that, I've probably caused an incredible number of educators (what teachers like to call themselves these days) to get flustered and bothered. College, they would say, should be a time of challenge, a quest for knowledge and a chance to broaden one's horizons.

These educators, mind you, are the same people who

took Plant Fertilization 104 and Asian Architecture 39 so they could have 3.9 averages and get into grad school. They are cut from the same mold as the high school advisers who swore to you all through high school that the SAT didn't mean all that much when you're trying to get in college, but who told you to forget the Ivy League when you only made 1,200.

People who find out what kind of classes I take often blink their eyes, look at me incredulously and then ask what that possibly could have to do with journalism. I'll have to admit that some of my classes tax even my own well-honed ability for contriving lame excuses. For the most part, however, I spout off a stock answer I developed long ago.

Life in the Turn Lane



"It is better for a journalist to know a little about a lot of things than for him to know a great deal about a very few things," I say.

The response, of course, is utter sheep dip. I don't use it anymore on journalism professors, because one began to cough and gag when I did. It works fine on everyone else, though.

It won't be long before those of us who are seniors will begin the seemingly hopeless search for a real

job—one we can legitimately hate for 40 hours a week. In that search, we will run across interviewers who quite probably took similar shortcuts when they lounged around in academia for four years. The key, one guesses, is to keep these people from finding out the titles of the courses actually taken. So-and-So 31 or This-and-That 58 sounds a little better than Introduction to So-and-So or Basic This-and-That.

It's also a lot easier on me when I go home. My parents are nice about sending me to college, even though my mom hasn't had a new article of clothing since 1974. I find it simpler to show good ol' mom and dad A's and B's on easier courses than to explain to them that a C-minus is a good grade in Basic Structures of Organic Chemistry. They stay happy and I keep getting money.

In fairness to those instructors I have had in the past, let me say that there is no such thing as an easy course around here. The operative term is easier, and I'm positive that the instructors of some of the Teflons (read slides) I've had, know they don't teach the kind of class where students spend three hours a day grappling to master the material.

"Your attitude is shocking and has no place on a college campus or in a college newspaper," I hear the folks saying now. They're right. And come May, it won't be, because I'll have managed to slide right on out of this illustrious institution.

David Poole, a senior journalism and Introduction to major from Gastonia, is a columnist and assistant sports editor for The Daily Tar Heel.

The new curriculum

After 2½ years of study, UNC's proposed curriculum is in near-final form. The Committee on Undergraduate Curricular Reform, having given faculty and students a chance to poke holes in its proposal, will patch it up and submit it for consideration and revision to the University's administrative board and Faculty Council Educational Policy Committee. The administration is taking its time with the new curriculum, because it will profoundly affect the quality of a Carolina education.

Although some students have misgivings about the process used to develop the new curriculum—only two students were on the committee of 17 that put the final report together—we must judge that process, in part, by its product. The committee's report outlines a strong curriculum, one that would give students a broader, more cohesive education than that required by the present curriculum.

The proposal attempts to lift Carolina's curriculum from the departmental depths to which it has sunk. In place of the present requirements for humanities and social science courses, it creates new requirements in "perspectives": the aesthetic, the philosophical, the natural and social sciences, and Western historical. It also revises the requirements for the basic skills courses—math, English composition and foreign language—that a University graduate ought to have. The proposed curriculum is meant to provide a more general education; its structure follows the form of those perspectives rather than departmental categories. It will press the undergraduate to expand his knowledge outside his major and related fields.

In doing so, the new curriculum must limit, to a degree, the choices it leaves open to students within the General College. If implemented, the proposal would withdraw credit for foreign language 1 courses that all freshmen should have taken in high school, thereby lending some force to admission requirements for language. It also specifies that one course in the Western historical perspective must concern the period before 1700, thus ruling out courses in the Afro-American studies curriculum. Yet AF-Am courses can be used to fulfill the other part of the requirement, and new ones may be developed.

The report also would force bachelor of Science degree candidates to channel their elective courses into the five perspectives; yet this, like the other requirements, does not seem unreasonable in the context of the whole report and its objective of general education. In fact, more general educational requirements would seem necessary for students whose studies are heavily concentrated in a single scientific field.

The success of the new curriculum will depend partly on the ability of this University to communicate with the state's public high schools, which produce most of UNC's students. It assumes, for instance, that high school foreign language instruction can be improved by 1984, when UNC's language requirements would become stricter. It also would require far more extensive testing of students before they enter the University, and the need for such testing in math and foreign language must be emphasized to high schools, else the curriculum reform will break down before it begins.

The proposed curriculum is the product of hours of thought and discussion by students and faculty committed to improving undergraduate education. It will be worthwhile, however, unless administrators ensure that the philosophy of general education is maintained as the curriculum report's proposals are implemented. Its perspectives cannot become mere categories into which courses—and students—are shoved to meet requirements. Such courses, as they are taught, must incorporate those perspectives; interdisciplinary and capstone courses, which bring together several fields and perspectives, should be developed.

The University has committed \$150,000 to the improvement of general education, but it must maintain its philosophical commitment to that goal as the curriculum reforms are instituted. Otherwise, the College Curriculum Report will be another high-minded educational idea doomed to fail.

So much for the radicals

1980 has been a rough year for those who appreciate a little creative radicalism. This past summer, former Yippie leader Jerry Rubin took a \$30,000-a-year job on Wall Street. Then in September Abbie Hoffman, another Yippie, surrendered to police just as his new book came out, leading some to speculate that he sought the financial rewards his book was sure to bring.

And now, an article in November's *Esquire* magazine has revealed what former Beatle John Lennon has been doing with his time these past few years.

To refresh those who may have forgotten, Lennon was always the radical Beatle. He's the one who allegedly proclaimed the Beatles were bigger than Jesus Christ. He once announced at a Beatles benefit concert attended by the royal family that members of the audience who liked the band's performance could applaud. He then looked up at the nobility sitting in the royal box and added that if they were pleased, they could just rattle their jewelry.

Lennon is the one who wrote only a decade ago, *Imagine no possessions/I wonder if you can*.

Apparently Lennon couldn't. The *Esquire* article notes that in the last few years he has been gathering quite a few, including a Palm Beach mansion, 250 Holstein cows and 1,600 acres of land in the Catskills.

He recently admitted in another interview that his radicalism in the early '70s was phony, the result of guilt feelings from always making money.

For the past five years Lennon has spent most of his time in seclusion. He said he was tired of being obliged to the record companies, the media and the public. He even said once he resented being an artist who had to perform for "idiots who don't know anything. They can't feel; I'm the one that's feeling, because I'm the one that's expressing. They live vicariously through me."

Though we may criticize Lennon for his contradictory styles of preaching and practicing, he has made one point that seems indisputable. While he has been raking in money singing about the evilness of materialism, he has abused those who've bought his albums and made him rich. Apparently, his fans are idiots.

Letters to the editor

'DTH' criticized for editorial decision

To the editor:

I wonder if the *DTH* consistently practices defamation as a means of validating poor journalism.

On Oct. 31, the *DTH* ran a front-page article concerning a protest against Shell Oil by a group of UNC law students. "Job recruiters for oil firm met by protest," (*DTH*, Oct. 31). The article incorrectly quoted a statement made by Alex Charns as to reasons for the protest.

To correct the error and "set the record straight," Charns wrote a letter to the editor which was published Nov. 5. The letter, as submitted to the *DTH*, was typewritten and seemingly easy to reproduce in print. Unfortunately, the paper again misrepresented Charns by deleting a portion of his letter.

The deleted portion, "Examples of such policies are opposition to small scale renewable energy projects and profit gouging," was transformed into "Examples of such policies oppose small scale..." etc. The original sentence was intended to specify examples of oil company policies which the protesters found counter to the public interest. The staff, in its misguided exercise of editorial discretion, constructed the sentence so as to confuse and obscure the point made by Charns.

In a note following the letter the *DTH* unequivocally asserted its accuracy in regards to the oral statement misquoted in the Oct. 31 article. In doing so, the staff essentially called Charns a liar.

Considering the above, I would like to pose the rhetorical question of whether a paper that cannot correctly reproduce a typewritten statement can be believed to have correctly quoted an oral statement.

I think not, despite a tacky, poorly phrased editor's note to the contrary. Clean it up, kids!

Jerry Swartzberg
UNC Law Student

Refreshing

To the editor:

In a recent letter, Mark McCombs criticizes David Poole in his column "Masters of the obvious are wretched pests," (*DTH*, Nov. 3), for focusing his "attempts at humor" on "perfectly obvious and nauseatingly overworked themes as people who make

aggravatingly trite observations." McCombs then turns his attack toward Poole's weekly column by referring to it as being "aggravating" and "trite."

In responding, I'd like to first state (and please correct me if I am wrong) that I cannot recall having seen a recent glut of articles dealing with "overworked themes" such as masters of the obvious. Perhaps I am restricting myself too severely, but my course work necessitates that I confine myself largely to literature dealing with subject matter pertaining to accounting and economic theories. By comparison, Poole's column provides a refreshing and

entertaining break from routine.

If McCombs is satisfied with the drudgery of academics then that is his problem, but in the future I hope that he'll temper his caustic remarks with a bit of humor so that Poole can get back to the business of providing the rest of us a few chuckles with which to start the day. If nothing else, at least his column uses space which otherwise would be wasted on letters from people like McCombs and myself.

Chip Sherrill
G-10 Colony Apartments



What it all boils down to

The College Curriculum Report

By ELIZABETH DANIEL

During the next few weeks, the College Curriculum Report will be studied and amended for the last time by the Committee on Undergraduate Curricular Reform before it is sent to the Faculty Council for final approval. The changes proposed in this document will strengthen the curriculum, but they are not earthshaking. Unless the Faculty Council makes drastic changes, the new curriculum will provide students a broader education with a coherent philosophy behind it, when it is implemented in 1982. It will not, however, mark a momentous change in UNC's undergraduate education.

Student reaction to the report has been indifferent. Last week, two student forums were held on the report, giving students their last chances to voice opinions before the report returned to committee. Approximately 30 students attended each forum.

At an informational hearing held Oct. 14, one week after the report was published, only three students not associated with the report through committees were present. Most students are not concerned about curriculum changes, or anything else, that will not affect them during their stay at Carolina, and this report will not directly affect anyone now enrolled. Even so, the report is hardly one that would inspire controversy even if it were to be implemented next fall.

The report endorses general education by requiring a broader distribution of courses. It also changes the basic skills requirements and gives reasons for each change—hardly something that would provoke students to organize protests or even struggle out of their dormitory rooms for a hearing.

The report is such an unobjectionable, positive document that even the token complaints raised at the forums were tempered with mild praise and an endorsement of the curriculum's philosophy.

At the Arts and Sciences forum Oct. 30, Student Body President Bob Saunders and Black Student Movement Chairperson Mark Canady both halfheartedly endorsed the report before making

perfunctory complaints. Saunders complained about the proposed withdrawal of credit for the first semester of a foreign language and Canady questioned the affect the Western historical perspective requirement would have on the Afro-American studies program. Their objections will be considered when the committee makes final revisions in the report.

The proposed changes in the curriculum, though not drastic, will add breadth to the curriculum and will provide students with a more general education than the present curriculum does.

Under the proposal, students would be required to take only one more course in the General College than they do now. However, the new report replaces the required eight courses from three categories with nine courses spread across five perspectives—two in the natural sciences, two in different social sciences, two in the Western historical perspective, two in the aesthetic perspective, which include literature and the fine arts and one in the philosophical perspective.

The basic skills section of the report requires all students to complete one course in mathematics and to take or place out of two semesters of a foreign language. However, in 1984, credit for the first semester of foreign language will be withdrawn, and students who place into foreign language 2 must go through foreign language 3. In 1986, students will be further required to take or place out of three semesters of foreign language.

The proposed curriculum also would expand the concept of general education into the junior and senior years for students seeking bachelor of arts degrees by requiring them to take one course from each of the five perspectives.

Both the basic skills and perspectives sections of the report include an explanation of why each is necessary for a general education and how such education will be achieved. All the requirements seem reasonable and philosophically sound except one—the math/foreign language option.

The option included in the report is almost identical to the math/foreign language option in the present curriculum, and it still does not make any educational sense. When the report is first implemented, students will be required to take either one extra mathematics course or two more foreign language courses.

At least the committee does not attempt to justify the requirement. In the report, it cites financial constraints

for preserving the option, and Samuel Williamson, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, calls it a "tradeoff." This mathematics/foreign language option stands out in an otherwise sound curriculum. The substitution of foreign language for math cannot be justified for reasons other than departmental politics.

To ensure continued study of the curriculum after the changes are implemented, the report proposes the creation of an administrative sub-committee on general education with a non-voting student member. It is good that a student will be on the committee, but it is all too typical of the administration's attitude that he will not have a vote. Throughout the process, the administration has done a second rate job of assuring that students were involved in the report. The original committee appointed by Williamson in April 1978 to study curriculum revision had three student members. The present Committee on Undergraduate Curricular Reform has two student members.

However, in the crucial subcommittee stage, where recommendations were made for revising the original Thornton Report, student presence clearly was lacking. When the Thornton Report was released, only a few student hearings were held before the subcommittees were formed and revision began. Only four of the nine subcommittees had student members, and only one forum was held to discuss the committee reports.

However, the past few weeks have shown that Williamson is more interested in getting student opinion on the report. The College of Arts and Sciences organized two hearings, and Williamson has also attended several sponsored by other groups.

Williamson and the other committee members should now move to make the student membership more than symbolic by giving the student member of the general education subcommittee a vote.

In spite of the flaws in the process used to revise the curriculum proposal, the committee has come up with a fairly good proposal that will at least begin to strengthen our curriculum. However, the University should ensure that there is more student involvement in further curriculum decisions.

Elizabeth Daniel, a sophomore from Perry, Fla., covers Faculty Council and curriculum reform for The Daily Tar Heel.