

The Daily Tar Heel

96th year of editorial freedom

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The saga of the budget process

It's right that students have control of student activities fees. It's also right that Student Congress, as UNC's representative body, allocate those fees to various campus groups.

But the inconsistencies, the built-in ambiguities and the downright contentions of this year's Student Congress budget process lead to only one conclusion: there has got to be a better way.

A thankless task

The congress' thankless task of allocating student fees to campus organizations was especially difficult this year, since the 37 groups that submitted funding requests asked for a total of \$350,000 — almost twice as much money as the congress had to allocate.

During the two weeks of congress Finance Committee hearings, committee members were forced to slash and burn their way through each group's budget, in their quest to form a balanced budget bill to present to the full congress.

Respect for student groups lacking

But many student group leaders who presented their budgets to the congress have legitimate complaints about the way they were treated. It's necessary for congress members to approach every budget with critical eyes, but asking questions that show glaring ignorance of a group's actions and programs is not only irresponsible, but rude. As one frustrated student leader said, "I would go through and explain something, then three minutes later they would ask me to explain what I had just talked about. They didn't even listen to us."

Examples of frivolous debate and wasted time abounded during Sunday's nearly 12-hour budget hearing, in which the Finance Committee's recommendations were considered by the full congress.

When the congress examined Student Television's budget request, one congress member introduced an amendment to defund STV entirely. He then announced that he would vote against his own proposal, and had only made the motion so he could voice some personal concerns with STV. He proceeded to severely criticize the organization, saying that the money that goes toward it falls into a "black hole." Several congress members giggled at his barb, while STV representatives had to sit silently before the congress and squirm — they weren't allowed to speak unless addressed.

Although the proposal to defund STV was resoundingly defeated, the congress wasted valuable time, while STV was subjected to unnecessary verbal abuse from a congress member who could have voiced his concerns more productively at a more appropriate time.

When questioning student groups, congress members should treat student representatives with respect, and strive to keep unrelated issues out of the discussion. It was encouraging that the perennial debate over CGLA funding, which seems destined to remain a fixture of budget hearings, lasted only one hour and 40 minutes; last year, it was even longer. Also, congress members did make an admirable effort to avoid attacking the group on moral or ethical grounds, concentrating instead on political questions and the recent referendum.

Compromising the process

Inconsistency in the budget process has also been a problem. A case in point is the Campus Y, which was excluded from the budget process because it did not amend its constitution to include a clause stating that any amendments to the constitution must be approved by the congress.

Because the Campus Y only receives funding for summer activities, the group's co-presidents balked at changing their 10-page constitution to gain

congress approval. Instead, they created a summer constitution to turn in to the congress' Rules and Judiciary Committee. When the committee voted not to accept the constitution, Student Body President Kevin Martin arranged a compromise. The Finance Committee's recommended allocation to the Campus Y — \$1,705 — was allocated instead to the Executive Branch, which will donate the money to the Campus Y.

The congress, in its effort to gain more control over the group, actually lost control over the student fees the Campus Y will receive. The Campus Y managed to beat the system, but the congress compromised its principles by circumventing its own procedure.

Spending time on digressions

Also, it is not congress members' job to tell group members, during budget hearings, how to improve their services or activities. For example, when the congress considered the Carolina Course Review's budget, members spent valuable time suggesting changes in the group's operations.

It's good for congress members to question group's actions and to offer suggestions for improvements from a student viewpoint. However, such suggestions should not be part of the budget process, which is already too complicated.

Sharing the blame with the system

The entire congress can't be blamed for the actions of a few of its members. Also, many of this year's problems were caused by factors beyond congress members' control. Those factors include the increase in the number of groups asking for funds; the defeat of the referendum calling for a \$1.25 increase in student fees; and the inexperience of the new congress, whose members were just inaugurated last month.

And despite the chaos of this year's budget process, prospects for next year are good. The groundwork is there — congress members just have to take advantage of it.

The inauguration date for next year's congress members has been moved to a later date, so that from now on, the budget process will be their last major responsibility, rather than their first. When congress members have a whole year to become familiar with parliamentary procedure, various student organizations and the content of their own by-laws, the budget process should run more smoothly.

Also, the congress recently passed a resolution to invoke a section of the Student Code that requires groups funded by student fees to submit monthly reports to the congress.

If the congress chooses to exercise that power, its members could use the reports to gain a better understanding of student fee-funded groups. This would foster more respect for those groups, as well as help the congress to develop a more informed critical eye when dealing with those groups' budget requests.

The congress should also consider spacing the final budget hearing over more than one day. Getting everything over with in one day is convenient, but expecting congress members to remain patient and professional for such a marathon session is unrealistic.

Student Congress members who spent long hours poring over budget requests and tapping on calculators should be commended for their service to students. But they have been working under a flawed system.

Some much-needed reforms in that system have already been made; but reforms in attitudes are also needed. Only when congress members and student group leaders make a commitment to communication, cooperation and mutual respect can the budget process truly be effective. — Jean Lutes

Readers' Forum

Fighting to free the bound periodicals

Roy Crisp
Guest Writer

It started out as just a joke, a cute little April Fool's Day prank. It couldn't be any more than that, right? After all, I received my inspiration off the wall of the men's restroom.

Those who passed Davis Library on March 31 saw the fruit of a very silly mind, for, sitting on the sculpture outside the building, was a man reading a novel and holding a sign that said "Free the Bound Periodicals" in big English script, with the letters "AFAP" in the lower right hand corner. Such a sight would undoubtedly produce a vast array of responses from passers-by. Some folks passed by and chuckled to themselves, going on their way smiling. Others saw the message and, frowning, wrote the protest off as an alcohol-persuaded frat stunt, finding their own agendas too constricting to allow a smile to pass their lips. Either that, or they just didn't get it. Others greeted the militant with "Fight the good fight!" "Love the sign," or "Could you tell me where Franklin Street is?" Two people took pictures, probably doubting anyone else would believe their story without such evidence. (By the way, guys, I'd like a print if that's possible.) One brave soul donated 20 cents to the cause. Give 'til it hurts, people! Thanks go out to these people, especially to the people who got a kick

out of it. I had a lot of fun that day.

However, there is one other group of people I would like to mention; those people who responded to the protest along the following lines: "I support most liberation causes, but I'm just not quite sure what you want to do here." Yes, that's right folks. People were ready to join up and fight. There are people ready and willing to fight for a cause, which is wonderful; however, there are people willing to fight for any cause . . . good, bad or otherwise. These people are in it for the show.

Protesting is a powerful device, and with any powerful device there are responsibilities and dangers. Protesting seems to draw the "fight for anything" crowd out of the woods like bagels draw cream cheese. These people are only interested in the spotlight, and will leave the group as soon as it falls out of the public eye. It also opens the group to being classified as "radical," which may turn off more people than it attracts. Radical positions do not draw support from a base big enough to

produce results. The people will hear it, but not believe it. Personally, I believe that protesting is extremely close to extortion, and as emotions are far from stable, any support drawn from such actions will not be long-lasting.

Protesting is, in my eyes, a last resort to gain support when all other avenues have been explored, these avenues being the vote, running for office, or basically attempts to achieve change using the current system. Protesting (i.e. chaining people to a building, etc.) is just not as classy a way of achieving change as doing the leg work and using the existing system. Social activism is a valid means to begin the education process, but an organization should not use emotional hijacking as its base of support. (Oh, its just those people protesting again.)

Great leaders in history have used demonstration as an effective weapon against the injustices of the establishment, for example, Martin Luther King, Ghandi, Solidarity; but, as my father told me over and over when I was younger, children shouldn't play with fire.

Roy Crisp is a junior psychology major from Charlotte.

Practice what you preach

To the editor:

I am pleased to learn of yet another protest, conducted by our own campus paragon of revolution, Dale McKinley. It seems the current protest movement McKinley is now backing has succeeded in once again trampling the rights of others. How far can this go?

I am by no means encouraging the suppression of anyone's First Amendment rights. As far as I am concerned, McKinley and his marauding cavalcade can protest anything that they haven't rallied against so far, although I cannot hazard a guess as to what that might be. But the line should be drawn when other's rights are infringed upon. This is exactly what happened in what the DTH described as the "theatrical protest" in Lenoir Hall Wednesday.

McKinley charged the police with an "arbitrary violation of free speech" after he and his group were removed from Lenoir Hall, but he cannot realistically back up his claim. It is apparent that the group disrupted the atmosphere of the cafeteria and rejected suggestions that they move their "production" to a more appropriate place of protest, the Pit. Patrons eating in the cafeteria were subjected to hearing the views of Dale and his gang during the normal sanctity of their lunch hour. An eating establishment is not the proper place for yet another exercise in futility by the CIAAC.

The State has the constitutional mandate to restrict activities which infringe on other's rights. Of course, McKinley would not recognize this, as it was his group that harassed and chased a CIA recruiter, and poured "blood" in front of his door. Perhaps McKinley should review his own record of upholding constitutional freedoms before making allega-



tions against others.

It is a pity that McKinley has so trivialized the stands he claims to represent. I, too, am concerned with the illegal actions of the CIA, but I am not compelled to make protest a way of life. McKinley has taken all credence from his cause by recklessly radical means. Indeed, McKinley has his First Amendment freedoms; it's too bad they are wasted in such a shamelessly abusive manner.

H. KEITH THOMERSON
Senior
Political Science

Walking in black moccasins

To the editor:

I'd like to respond to the letter written by Laurie Ann Winkler ("Blacks, whites both guilty," April 14). First of all, I want to apologize that Winkler's feelings were hurt. There is definitely no excuse for the treatment that she received, but I want her to realize that people — blacks, whites, Orientals, native Americans — are pretty low-down sometimes.

Yet, being a black man, if I knew Laurie, I would actually

be glad that this happened; I'd feel closer to her. You see, Laurie now knows (at least partially) the feeling of alienation that all blacks, especially black college students at predominantly white institutions, encounter periodically. Laurie would now understand if I told her of the continual bombardment of strange looks and degrading gestures that we endure. Laurie would empathize with the initial feelings of discomfort that I had at Springfest, due to the stares and unwelcome attitudes conveyed, as I walked to my best friend's (who happens to be white) blanket to relax. Laurie would understand if I told her about the time I ventured to a Christian group's meeting, only to be ostracized and yes, virtually ignored by the very ones who invited me.

The examples continue, but the point is made. I was pleased to read that Laurie will continue her efforts. I hope that this experience won't discourage her, but will magnify her ambition to experience other cultures. If it came down to it, I would be happy to be Laurie's, or any other of my white friend's, "wingman" at such an event. This is not to say that it would help the outside situa-

tion any; we would probably still overhear snickers or be the object of "double-takes." But, it is much easier to handle with a friend that understands. How about that? There is hope in this world yet!

CHRIS BROWN
Freshman
Advertising

Letters policy

The Daily Tar Heel encourages reader comments and criticisms. We ask that you follow a few guidelines in exchange for access to this unique public forum.

■ For ease of editing, all letters must be typed and double-spaced.

■ When submitting letters or columns, students should include name, year in school, major, phone number and home town.

■ The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity. Remember, brevity is the soul of wit.

Senior year is really puberty revisited

Kelly Johnson
Guest Writer

Senior year has all the classic symptoms of puberty: you feel overly emotional and confused, you suffer from an identity crisis and you feel no one understands what you are going through.

During your freshman, sophomore and junior years, you went to class, studied, went to basketball and football games and participated in all the normal college activities. But you were only going through the motions; you never really thought about what it all meant or what you were feeling.

Then wham! Senior year hits like a lightning bolt and you wonder where all the time went. For me, it was like I had suddenly acquired all my senses. I began to listen carefully to the Bell Tower. When I sat in my dorm room, I examined every nook and cranny so I wouldn't ever forget what my home of four years looked like. I made sure I went to every home basketball game and, after each one, counted how many remained.

Just as they did during puberty, tears come easily now. While I sat in the senior block at the last home game, I looked around the Smith Center and, with all my might, yelled my last "Go to hell, State!" With my eyes watering, I had to force myself to leave.

When James Taylor sang "Carolina In My Mind" during his October concert, tears fell again, as memories from the past three and a half years filled my mind. I thought about my introduction to Carolina at convocation, when we freshmen sat in Carmichael and listened to the tape of

when I will sign up for interviews and face the reality of graduation.

Gradually, reality sets in. A few weeks ago, two senior friends and I were sympathizing with each other's frustration over midterms. I said, "Sometimes I'm glad graduation is only three months away," which was the first time I had thought of graduation in a positive light. One of them looked at me and said, "It's only two months now." I gulped. Two months was too close.

Often, throughout puberty, you think no one can understand how you feel. As the end of senior year approaches, I feel separated from my younger friends when they say, "I wish I were graduating this year." I tell them, "No, you don't," but I know they can't really understand until they, themselves, are close to Commencement day.

But their lives at Carolina will go on after I leave. They will see the time-saving system of computerized drop-add implemented. They also will see beautiful, healthy trees of the "Big Woods" cut down for the Alumni Center, the monstrous parking deck built at Craige Dorm and increases in parking and room rates.

Just as I have my own unique memories of Carolina, they will have theirs. And when they become seniors, they, too, will relive puberty.

Kelly Johnson is a senior journalism major from Greensboro.