

The Daily Tar Heel

97th year of editorial freedom

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This convention is a bad call

For a governor who wants to be known as the "education governor," Jim Martin does not have a very good track record. And with the recent 5 percent non-personnel budget cut that Martin's administration imposed earlier than expected on all state agencies, he is only continuing an unhappy trend.

The cuts hurt all agencies, but they will especially impact the 16-campus university system. The various schools are approaching the cuts with different levels of panic. Appalachian State University officials say they used up their funds early on in the fiscal year, so the cuts now should have little effect, while East Carolina University and UNC-Charlotte administrators say they may be forced to withhold some faculty salaries, even though the cut is supposed to be non-personnel. A UNCC official said money used to hire graduate teaching assistants, part-time faculty and visiting lecturers may be kept back. Universities are also requiring faculty and staff to cancel school-related travel plans and refrain from requesting postage and making long-distance phone calls and photocopies except for final exams.

UNC's budget has been slashed by \$3 million, and while that is unlikely to affect salaries, administrators worry that the cut will have long-term effects that they cannot predict. At the

board opinion

extreme, administrators may even have to consider shutting down campus buildings to save money.

To treat educators this way is simply disgraceful, especially if universities must continue or expand hiring freezes. Administrators, faculty and staff deserve to be respected as professionals, free from such annoying regulations as no photocopying and the larger concerns over salary cuts. If Martin's administration is seriously concerned about the state losing outstanding faculty, it must stop sending the message that faculty needs don't matter.

In addition, the cuts may soon directly affect students. When graduate students are not hired (students who not only can teach other students but who need the money to continue their educations) or visiting lecturers are denied the chance to share their expertise with students, the budget slashing means students may not get the competitive education they have a right to expect.

North Carolina officials must find another way to fix its revenue shortage besides hacking away at university finances. If the revenue situation does not reverse itself before June 30, the end of this fiscal quarter, UNC will go into debt. Forcing an already-low annual budget to cover the previous year's problems will create a long-term crisis situation that the University cannot afford.

Martin's budget cut strikes out

Following a bill to deny funds to homosexual support groups on state university campuses, the N.C. House continued grandstanding this week when it voted to keep North Carolina on a list of 30 states calling for a federal constitutional convention. Supporters want to call a convention to add a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, but others have questioned the lack of limits that could be placed on constitutional change. This decision not only demonstrates the House's focus on another minor issue, it is a foolish idea that opens the Constitution up to major revisions.

The Senate had passed a proposal to remove the state from the list, but the House Rules Committee voted to give the proposal a negative report, effectively keeping the state on the list. With only 34 states needed to call the convention, the possibility remains very real that one could take place in the near future.

The prospects for a constitutional convention are interesting, because a balanced budget amendment is not the only thing that could be passed. Obviously, the federal deficit needs to be seriously considered, and an amendment to force the government to live up to its responsibilities deserves discussion, but the convention process

lacks any rules or guidelines about possible rewriting of the Constitution. Considering the conservative bent of the federal government, what could happen to the Constitution if lawmakers changed some of the more liberal aspects of it is frightening.

Conservatives often wish to limit First Amendment freedoms, as is evident in the House's recent proposal to limit the right of homosexual support groups to peacefully assemble in state college buildings. The convention might also provide a back door through which anti-abortionists could attack Roe vs. Wade. These may seem like far-fetched scenarios, but the mere idea of state legislators tampering with the basic tenets of the Constitution should worry voters and make them seriously question a convention.

If the convention's guidelines guarantee that a balanced budget amendment is the only one considered, this particular convention might not be such a bad idea. Right now, however, the N.C. General Assembly should not be worrying about such an amendment — it should concentrate on the budget crisis of their home state. Perhaps legislators should learn to balance their own budget before they start worrying about the solution for the federal deficit. — William Taggart

Readers' Forum

Looking at CGLA funding College Republicans' posters immature

To the editor:

Once, in a very far away land, in a long-lost time called childhood, I was shooting hoops with my best friend, Mike. I was twelve and he was thirteen. We lived on the same block and were both in Mrs. Carter's seventh grade class. He was my closest confidant, and, being older, he was kind of a hero to me; I could tell him almost anything and trust in his understanding and advice. As we were shooting baskets after school, some other guys came up and started a game of touch football. I knew most of them from Mrs. Carter's class and I spotted Chad, the seventh grade bully. I and most of the other kids in the class disliked him and avoided him whenever possible.

Mike and I decided to end our game and go home. It was almost time for dinner and Mom always chewed me out when I was late, so I decided to ride my bike home. Mike didn't have his so he would have to walk. He told me to go on though, not to get into trouble on his account. I said OK and reached over and gave him a hug goodbye.

Then I heard Chad and the other guys start yelling, "Look at the queers hugging!" "Fags! Fags!" I yelled for Chad to shut up, immediately regretting it. He ran over,

pushed me on the ground and kicked dirt in my face. Chad and his friends began to laugh and, as hard as I tried, I couldn't stop my tears. Mike just stood there not knowing what to do. I scrambled up and jumped on my bike, screaming, "I hate you; I'll get you back!" to Chad and all his friends and sped off. Mike ran after me, but I didn't stop.

When I got home I was still sobbing and my mom asked me what was wrong. I started to speak but then I realized that I couldn't. I couldn't tell my mom that, yes I did love Mike and maybe Chad and his friends were right, maybe I was a fag. At this I sobbed more and my mom sat hugging me. If I had been black, hispanic, or oriental and had been the victim of racial epithets, I could have told her and she would have said, "Be proud of who you are." Being gay I had to suffer in silence.

I remember this scene and many others because they cut so deeply and I had nowhere to turn. By the way, I lost my best friend Mike; he was scared of being labeled as a fag. Gay people often lose their friends and heroes.

I'm glad to say that I'm an adult now. I'm gay and my mother knows. She loves and supports me just as much or more so than she did then. I've come to terms

with my identity and I'm quite happy. I can't change but I wouldn't even if I could. I have new friends and heroes.

However, the bullies still exist and many people still suffer in fear and silence as gay adults due to institutionalized bigotry and homophobia! A new group has decided to join the ranks of mindless bigots and proclaim their homophobia — the UNC College Republicans. As of Friday, April 14 they had plastered "God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve" posters all over campus. They presumptuously claim an unwarranted religious prerogative and speak for God, implying that homosexuality is sinful. They call for the defunding of CGLA on grounds having absolutely nothing to do with the nature of their political organization. I guess maybe they have a direct telephone line to heaven. The arrogance of their actions is more than insulting. At any rate, if God made Adam and Eve then he made me too. He definitely made me, and many others like me, gay. I only have one reply for the UNC College Republicans... grow up.

LYNN COCHRAN
Junior
English

Keep morality off the books

To the editor:

I am absolutely infuriated that representatives such as Stephen Arnold, R-Guilford, take it upon themselves to impose their perverted sense of morality upon society. I refer specifically to this legislator's recent sponsoring of a bill that would prohibit state and student funds from being used by UNC campus gay and lesbian associations such as the CGLA. His reasoning is that the behavior and activities "promoted" by these activities "are on the books as illegalities."

It is legislation like this that makes me wonder just how such laws came to be "on the books," as Mr. Arnold so vaguely puts it. I want to know how anyone got the right to dictate which sexual activities two people may or may not participate in when they are in private. How can any outsider justify calling any sort of sexual intimacy between mature, responsible, consenting adults — the most personal expression of love — "immoral"? Simply saying it's "on the books" is a cop-out. Racial discrimination used to be on the books, too. I have a sneaking suspicion that "on the books" is synonymous with "in The Book" — and if I'm not mistaken, the Bible and politics do not mix in this country. If Arnold wants to go by the books, let him read the chapter about separation of church and state.

We have heard the same arguments again and again in the continuing debates over CGLA funding. It makes me wonder if anyone is really listening. The point has been made that students are to decide how to use student funds. The point has been made (countless times) that the CGLA is an organization here to help the students — to provide information and to give some people a sense of identity and self-worth when they are being labeled "immoral" for a lifestyle they didn't intentionally choose. How can one be expected to deal with unprovoked looks of



disgust and obvious scorn from total strangers? The CGLA is a valuable and necessary organization.

It is time for us all to evaluate the foundations of our morals and values. I don't expect any Bible-thumping literalists to change their minds overnight; I'm just asking that we consider the reasons for our opinions instead of blindly following them. If we don't, the type of stagnation that lets people pass judgment on other human beings, justified only by "it's on the books," will prevail. Who can respect or have pride in a stagnant nation?

CHRISTOPHER BRADSHAW
Sophomore
Music

Punching holes in bills' logic

To the editor:

Before beginning this letter, I would like to say that I am a conservative heterosexual who does not approve of much of what the CGLA stands for. I believe that homosexuality is a crime against nature and a crime against one's own self. That is beside the point, however, and I do not wish to argue against homosexuals, for it is

their lives, and they should have at least this much say in how they should run it.

In a like manner, I am appalled that state Rep. Stephen Arnold wishes to require the UNC Board of Governors to defund the previously mentioned student organization. I could understand if he expressed a desire to see this action taken, but to require it? I would also be more sympathetic if his logic were more lucid, but any survivor of Philosophy 21 (symbolic logic) would punch mile-wide holes in it.

Mr. Arnold's first quote is clear: he wants it passed that "no state (or) student fees are used... to permit any gay and lesbian association or any other campus organization that advocates immoral, illegal or criminal behavior." He followed by saying "sodomy and other such related offenses are... illegalities. Any such homosexual behavior is certainly immoral." My first question is how does one automatically have a standard of morality? Personal morality, yes, but morality that is powerful enough to dictate our laws? Why does Mr. Arnold lump "immoral behavior" with acts that are considered illegal and criminal? I am also curious what "related offenses" he is referring to.

I would like to draw attention to another bill that is being considered — the bill proposing that sexual intercourse between people under 18 be declared illegal (a bill put forward by another representative from Guilford County — something in the water, perhaps?). If this bill is passed, would Mr. Arnold condemn dating in high schools? Would senior proms be declared "a related offense"? After all, one brings a date to functions such as pep rally dances. Romantic acts such as — gasp — dancing and (I hesitate to print it) kissing easily lead to sexual intercourse. Dating must, therefore, be an "immoral, illegal and criminal" act between high school students under the age of 18.

It is bad enough that a politician is making demands on how our education dollars are spent (does he have a doctorate in education or economics? Where does his authority come from in this area? God?), but that this politician is being ignorantly stubborn in his pre-civil rights attitude is beyond my capacity for understanding.

DOUGLAS ROGERS
Senior
Philosophy/history

Protesting support group irresponsible

To the editor:

Did anyone notice the hot pink fliers that were posted last Friday (Blue Jeans Day, for those of you who were out of the country)? They said: "God created Adam and Eve... Not Adam and Steve. Defund the CGLA. Distributed by the UNC College Republicans." Chances are you didn't, because some justifiably offended people took them down not long after the CRs posted them. While I don't condone the removal of an organization's legitimate advertisements (and these fliers were legitimate), I was not sorry to see them go.

I'm not much of a gay rights activist. I didn't wear jeans on Friday, mainly due to my latent cowardice of being pegged as a homosexual. And I'm not sure that I support the mandatory funding of the CGLA. Not due to the makeup of its members, understand, but because I'm not sure their funds are put to as good use in the University community as they should be. I would like to learn more about how their funds are distributed. But this issue is the only one relevant to this perennial controversy. The fact that the CGLA is an organization made up of homosexuals should not be considered at all.

For example, arguments against the CGLA's funding have been put forth

reasonably, if tastelessly, by writers at the Carolina Critic. While they have made some fairly offensive remarks, their position is the same as it is on most student-funded groups: We should not be forced to pay funds for organizations we do not wish to pay for or get nothing from for our money. The Carolina Critic society is definitely biased against homosexuals, but at least they have a legitimate concern.

One would think the CRs shared this position, but then on Blue Jeans Day they tried to appeal to the latent homophobia within many people, including me, in putting up prejudiced fliers. No, these were bigoted fliers. It hurt me to see that someone was using my religion to discriminate against a minority group. And can anyone reasonably expect the Student Congress to defund the CGLA because a Bible is being waved in their faces? The CRs deliberately tried to fan anti-CGLA sentiments last Friday in a manner which had little to do with student fees and money management, but more with ignorance, fear and intolerance. Sensationalism, pure and simple.

And in the N.C. General Assembly, Rep. Stephen Arnold, R-Guilford, is waging war against campus homosexual organizations, calling for a cutoff of funds at the state level. This decision belongs in the hands

of the students and not a self-appointed moral crusader who could easily destroy UNC's accreditation if his bill is passed. This would take control of our funds away from our duly elected representatives. I thought conservatives believed in self-designation of funds, but...

You don't have to support homosexuality to see that opposition on "moral" grounds to gay rights or gay support groups is on very shaky ethical ground. Their sexual preferences are their business and not ours. If the CGLA is to be defunded, and ultimately I hope it will not be, then let it be because they have not used their fees properly, not because of the prejudice that has existed for centuries.

The CRs have acted irresponsibly with their inflammatory fliers, and I guess I've played into their hands by bringing out the issue further. But they have simplified the CGLA funding question to the point of offensiveness. It is distressing that the College Republicans appear to be setting themselves up as an arch-conservative watchdog group in this matter, and I imagine that most students, Democrats and Republicans alike, would not approve.

WILLIAM SHUDDERTH
Freshman
RTVMP

The Daily Tar Heel

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