

Opinion

State must rededicate itself to teaching, research

As the University of North Carolina enters its third century, it carries with it a tradition of academic excellence of which it can be quite proud. Through 200 years of continuous dedication from the citizens of this state to the ideal of higher education, UNC fulfills its foremost mandate: to provide a quality of education to citizens of North Carolina at the lowest possible cost. However, little, if anything, in this world is permanent, and we must be painfully aware that everything those who preceded us worked so hard for will disappear overnight if we lessen our resolve or make unwise decisions concerning our future.

The flagship institution of the university system, UNC-CH, faces some difficult and unique questions. Its status as a liberal arts research institution has made discerning the school's purpose difficult for many, and thus, a schism has been created between those who stress teaching and those who stress research as the primary function of the University.

Clearly the two should go hand in hand. Originally, universities did not invite students to attend — they came of their own accord to view the intellectuals of the day at work. Even today it would be foolish to argue that the best education possible would not be to watch a master at work.

Several problems are evident. First,

Bill Hildebolt
Guest Writer

and least, some research is not conducive to this type of scrutiny. More importantly, far too few students are afforded the opportunity to see inside the scholar's laboratory, let alone his or her mind. Further, some of the best researchers are the worst communicators.

Where does this leave us? Ideally, we should retain the best researchers and encourage them not only to publish but to share their work with students. There should be real incentives to teach, and to teach well. The Center for Teaching and Learning should become an institute to rival the Institute of Government (and how appropriate it would be for UNC to be able to claim both) because teaching is our primary focus — lest we forget our mandate.

To this end, the best teachers with no interest in research at all should be retained, for these are the "Great Communicators," these are the people with faith and belief in youth, these are the people who instill in us the knowledge and confidence to succeed. Further, these are the people, the scholars, who can best understand the work of our own researchers and translate it to us when we can't access it ourselves.

There was a time when Chapel Hill was the University of North Carolina. That is no longer so. It is now merely one component of a 16-school system. Certainly, the ramifications of "educate the citizens of North Carolina" have taken on a new meaning for Chapel Hill. This mandate is now a mandate of the entire system. It is increasingly evident that the greatest overall success of the system will come through specialization of the individual schools. This is clearly an infallible truth — witness the recent growth and recognition of Appalachian State University and the universities of North Carolina at Greensboro, Charlotte and Wilmington as specialized and highly successful schools.

A clear definition of what Chapel Hill should contribute to this whole is now needed. Chapel Hill is in the precarious position of claiming as its populace the highest achievers in the state's secondary schools who want a liberal arts education. It is not something, however, that is ever said very loudly. Much more attention, and action, is given to bringing a broad cross-section of students from across the state into Chapel Hill. While this is indeed important, and should not be changed, it is impossible to overlook the fact that Chapel Hill does almost no recruiting within the state. It is unquestionable that the state loses a significant portion of the state's best and brightest students

because we refuse to recruit them.

To say that recruiting suffers for the same reason as everything else — no money — is not a sufficient excuse. The N.C. Constitution, in speaking about the University, says that the opportunity to attend "will be extended" to our citizens — not just made available, not just offered, but extended.

For Chapel Hill to continue to be a success, it needs to specialize more than it does. If it is to be a research institution and an institution of higher learning, UNC-CH needs to recruit the brightest and most enthusiastic students from across the state. It needs the type of students who will pursue their studies into their professors' offices, laboratories and publications. Chapel Hill needs students who can assimilate into the atmosphere that the faculty creates.

Perhaps the current policy of non-recruitment is an effort to weed out in early stages those who do not fit this mold. However, non-recruitment can be dangerous. Other schools are far too willing to woo away those top students whose presence is not just beneficial but vital to the University. We must be ready and willing to extend to them the opportunities which exist in abundance at Chapel Hill.

So we can see that the developments of students and faculty are intimately connected. A mediocre student will not gain much from the

insights of a researcher, and a researcher will not be inspired by an unenthusiastic student. The bright, excited student will gain knowledge from, and will transfer excitement to, the researcher. This same student will similarly need top teachers to be able to stride ahead in his or her weaker subjects. Chapel Hill should strive to have the latter type of student and the best faculty — researchers and teachers alike.

Once students are here, the seemingly simple solution of recruiting and retaining the top teachers is not at all simple. North Carolina is not a rich state, and Chapel Hill has a sadly small endowment. In the end, it all comes down to money. A researcher demands a certain salary, dictated by the market; if Chapel Hill cannot afford it, someone else will.

What is the answer? If one were to say that the state simply cannot afford rising salaries, and try to keep up the buildings and grounds, and keep tuition low, and thereby conclude that an inferior faculty — and education — was the only solution, he would be missing a large factor in the equation.

Funds the state pumps into UNC are obvious — anyone can see the numbers and gasp at their magnitude. The results are not always so obvious. Expanded minds like those of Charles Kuralt, Terry Sanford, Vermont Royster and Albert Coates are not quantifiable, although they are visible

— thousands more of the products of Chapel Hill contribute to this state unnoticed. Research Triangle Park did not appear between N.C. State, Duke and Chapel Hill by accident; in this day when information translates as power and money, that is no small factor in the livelihood of the state. The list of the state's benefits from UNC-CH goes on, indeed, in as many directions and ways as there are students.

Cutting education dollars is not saving taxpayers' money but putting a stranglehold on hope for the future. We needn't feel sorry for faculty who pack up and move because they can't afford living near Chapel Hill any longer. We are the ones who will lose in the precariously near long run. If we truly want to remain ahead and solidify our future, we must rededicate ourselves to education. The University is the keeper of the past and the cradle of the future. As the University thrives, so does the state; as it dies

Bill Hildebolt is a sophomore economics major from Winston-Salem. This is the official position of student government and served as the introduction to the report on faculty pay prepared by the Special Interests Committee.

Housing ignores RHA input

This is an open letter to Wayne Kuncel, director of University housing:

Student input should be an essential element of making every decision that affects the way students live and every decision that is made with students' money. This has not been the case.

The Department of University Housing exists to serve the students who live in on-campus dorms. The Residence Hall Association (RHA) also exists to serve the residents in their dorms and to be the voice of resident students on this campus. With such a large, knowledgeable organization of students willing to give their time and work so that the Department of Housing will know what student opinion is, it seems absolutely absurd that such a resource would not be utilized. And yet this has again been the case.

Bathroom door locks were installed in the STOW residence college on the spur of the moment and without much thought or consideration given to the viability of the locks. Students objected and have

Liz Jackson
Guest Writer

proceeded to bypass the inconvenient locks, thus rendering the expensive locks useless and a waste of money. Earlier this year, the department also installed peepholes in all dorm room doors, and that was also criticized as a waste of money. Now study rooms and a laundry room have had self-locking doors installed. This too has been cited by students as an unnecessary expenditure. These locks are inconvenient and unwanted, and they have not been used because the doors have been propped open by the residents.

I am not criticizing the intent to increase safety for the residents, for that is a prime concern for RHA as well, but I do criticize the way in which the solutions were chosen.

If the Department of Housing had bothered to ask for student input either from the residents of these dorms or from RHA, I have no doubt

that we would have discouraged the projects. It is obvious that students are not in favor of these inconvenient and expensive safety measures, regardless of whether they were done for the residents' good.

With student input and rational, thoughtful consideration into the security problems on campus, alternative solutions could have been found. But because the Department of Housing chose not to seek input from the organization that is set up to provide realistic resident student opinion, the money for these door locks has been wasted because they are not used.

I hope that in the future when decisions are being made that will directly (and indirectly) affect the students who pay your salary, you will earnestly look for and rely upon the student input that is always available. There is no excuse for not doing so.

Liz Jackson is a junior physical therapy major from Atlanta. She is president of the Residence Hall Association.

Graduate student, faculty research adds to UNC's mission

Your recent editorial about the relationship between faculty research and teaching ("Students need a say in study," April 24) made two general assertions. The first of these, that student input should have been solicited as part of a recent Board of Visitors report on research, makes sense. I hereby offer one student's opinion. However, my thinking on this issue diverges from your second assertion, that research detracts from the learning process because it takes up faculty time that could be spent teaching and advising. I will describe a number of ways that both graduate and undergraduate students benefit from faculty research activities.

For many graduate students, the educational process centers on research. We read research and critically evaluate it, drawing our own conclusions as to its soundness, importance and meaning. By doing this, we come to understand the critical issues and controversies in our

Mike Crant
Guest Writer

fields. We learn how to conduct research so that we can contribute new knowledge to our field. Graduate students in most of the non-professional degree programs must complete an original research project — the thesis or dissertation — as the capstone requirement to earning a degree. This is done under the watchful eye of a faculty adviser.

A faculty actively and enthusiastically engaging in research activities complements each of these aspects of graduate learning. They are better able to help a graduate student assess past research, better able to teach us how to do research and better able to facilitate the learning that accompanies writing a thesis or dissertation.

In addition, many graduate students collaborate with faculty

members on research projects as part of the graduate school experience. This research is often of sufficient quality to warrant publication in journals. I firmly believe that the best part of my own doctoral education has occurred in this informal manner, actually doing research with faculty members rather than just reading and thinking about it. This valuable learning experience would never have occurred had our faculty neglected research activities in order to spend more time advising and teaching.

Undergraduate students also benefit directly from their professors' research activities. To do quality research, a professor must keep up with advances in his or her field. This entails reading current books and journals in order to know what other scholars are thinking. The undergraduate benefits because the professor can present current thinking about a subject rather than rehash outdated theories that were in vogue when that professor attended graduate school.

YEAR-END WRAP-UP OR "LOOK MA, NO ART!"

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THIS YEAR'S EVENTS FALL INTO 5 CATEGORIES:
① NEW STUFF; ② FOLKS WHO ARE LEAVING; ③ THINGS THAT BELONG IN THE TWILIGHT ZONE; ④ CRISES; AND ⑤ INFECTIONS.

LET THE LISTS BEGIN! →

COMING OR GONE? (ARE THEY HERE? ARE THEY ISSUES?)

- BCC/MCC
- STUDENT STORE
- CAT'S CRADLE
- PIT PREACHERS
- FERRIS AND ZEEMAN

NEW IN TOWN

- PAUL HARDIN
- UNION STATION
- A NEWSPAPER RACK
- CONDOM MACHINES
- ARBORETUM GATES

WE'RE GONNA MISS (?)

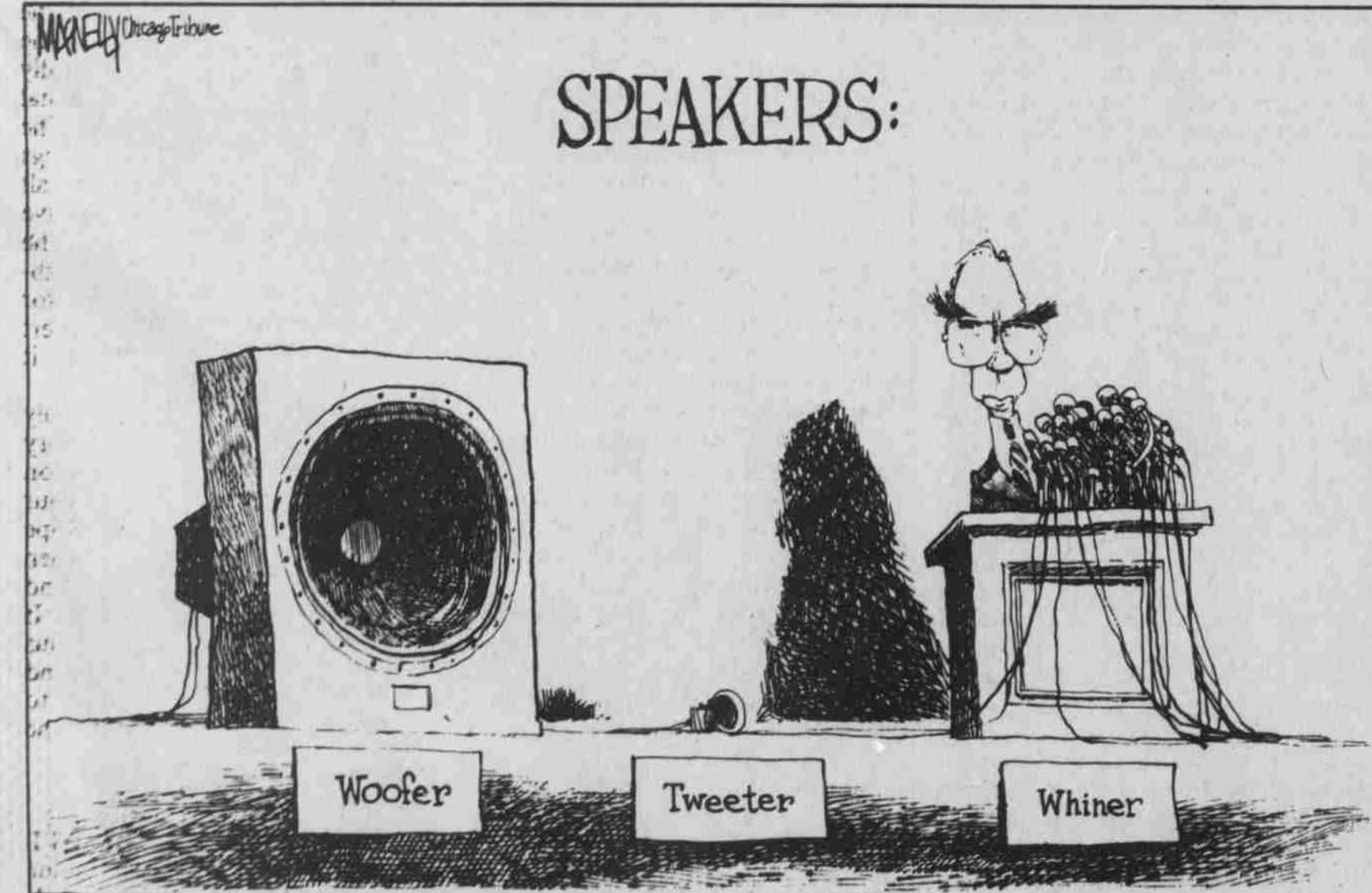
- DALE MCKINLEY
- MIKE DUKAKIS
- CHRISTOPHER FORDHAM
- GREG RILEY
- THE PIT WALL

CRISES

- TORNADES IN RALEIGH
- ALASKAN OIL SPILL
- TRAPPED WHALES
- QUAYLE IS VP
- "GENERAL COLLEGE" GOES NATIONAL

INFECTIONS

- MEASLES
- COMPUTER VIRUS
- MARCH MADNESS
- CAMPUS WATCH
- WHATEVER THE COLLEGE REPUBLICANS CAUGHT



Whether we like it or not, the reality of university life is that academic reputations are largely a function of research productivity.

Many faculty members concentrate much of their research activity around a particular topic within their discipline, becoming an expert on the topic. This also benefits undergraduate learning in that most people are inclined to want to talk about that topic in class. My own research (the collaborative projects alluded to earlier) has focused on the issue of drug-testing programs and how job applicants and employees respond to them. When I teach organizational behavior classes, I always spend a day

of class time conveying to students what I have learned about drug testing. The students seem genuinely interested in learning what I have discovered, and class discussion about the issue is generally active and insightful. I sense that the students enjoy having a "resource person" who knows a good deal about an issue and who can answer their questions about the subject.

Finally, whether we like it or not, the reality of university life is that academic reputations are largely a

function of research productivity. If faculty members neglect research or turn out shoddy research, the reputation of the University will suffer. I imagine that most students are proud to attend a university with such a fine reputation and would hate to see it decline. To maintain (and further) our reputation, we must continue to produce high quality research that advances knowledge in a number of disciplines.

In sum, faculty research activities do take valuable time that could be spent advising and teaching additional courses. But there are many benefits to both graduate and undergraduate students from these research activities. I agree with the Board of Visitors that excellence in research greatly adds to the teaching mission of the University.

Mike Crant is a graduate student in business administration from Orlando, Fla.

Public should demand stricter rules

The oil industry, backed by President Bush, wants to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. But the effects of drilling in Alaska's North Slope, as well as the disaster of the Exxon Valdez, show why our federal government should not allow oil exploration in the refuge.

Because the North Slope's environment is so fragile and unique, scientists have not yet determined the effects oil drilling has had on the slope's tundra, plants, birds and caribou. But scientists say there are clear signs of environmental damage. For example, there are hundreds of waste pits filled with toxic metals and hydrocarbons produced in drilling which have unexpectedly leaked across the tundra. The abundance and diversity of tiny fresh water animals near the bottom of the food chain have decreased, presumably as a result of contamination.

Another more dramatic example is the discovery last year of a dead polar bear that drank a mixture of anti-

Ashley Campbell
Staff Writer

freeze and pink dye. The bear was stained fluorescent pink by industrial poisons.

The oil industry emphasizes that it only wants to drill on a small part of the refuge. But the area on which it wants to drill is the coastal plain, which environmentally is the most sensitive area on the refuge. Also, the Office of Technology said in a 1988 report that the "sphere of influence" affecting sensitive species would be 30 to 40 times larger than the "footprint" of the development.

The results of drilling on the North Slope and the Exxon Valdez catastrophe demonstrate the oil industry's disregard for the precious environment in Alaska. This lack of concern and the damage already done to the environment are more than sufficient reasons why drilling should not be

expanded in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

R.E.M. said Saturday night, via their video screen, to realize the power of a single action. We, as constituents, have power to influence our government's policies and can utilize this power through a single action. We can write our congressmen and president to express our concern about the situation in Alaska. We need to demand more stringent regulations for the oil industry and no expansion of drilling in Alaska.

To make it as easy as possible for you to write your congressmen, here are some addresses: Sen. Jesse Helms, 402 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; Sen. Terry Sanford, 716 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; Rep. David Price, 1223 Longworth Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515 and Pres. George Bush, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20500.

Ashley Campbell is a junior journalism major from Covington, Ga.