

# The Daily Tar Heel

97th year of editorial freedom

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## A solid beginning Tuition initiative defends interests

The University of North Carolina system can expect tuition increases in the coming years — an idea which has both students and campus administrators concerned. Students, many of whom depend heavily on financial aid, do not want such an increase; to them, the "great bargain" in education which they found here may be vanishing before their eyes. Administrators, struggling to get adequate state funds for construction, new academic programs and suffering libraries, want at least some of the new revenue to stay on their campus. While Chancellor Hardin has spoken in behalf of this campus concerning state budget restraints, the student's side of the issue has been vastly under-represented.

### board opinion

The new six-point Tuition Defense Initiative (TDI), proposed by Student Body President Brien Lewis, tries to fill this void. Although many goals of the plan may be out of reach, the TDI aims high for an important cause and should be received with open minds by legislators and members of the Board of Governors. Regardless of exact intent, the proposals do take great steps to represent student interests within the University.

Lewis recommends that the president of the UNC Association of Student Governments present a monthly report to the BOG. The BOG presides over the 16-campus system and presents business of the system to the N.C. General Assembly, but no direct contact with student opinion exists. While board members have shown

disdain for the idea of having a student on the board, the reports are feasible within the framework of BOG meetings.

The TDI also recommends that student leaders appear before House and Senate committees and subcommittees, another feasible idea. Those bodies are even more remote from ordinary students, and hearing their concerns before making decisions that affect students would assist them in their job.

Two of the proposals would be ideal, but will meet heavy opposition from legislators reluctant to give up financial control of the universities. Lewis proposes that 20 to 25 percent of any tuition increase be used for need-based aid. State priorities, however, call for the money to be diverted toward more pressing matters.

Second, the proposal suggests that all funds now directed by the legislature to private colleges and universities be used only for need-based aid. But in the long run, this could put the state in greater financial trouble because more students would turn to the public schools. Needless to say, the General Assembly won't go for it, but it shows that students are concerned where their money goes. Ideally, their money should pay for their education.

While TDI may fall short on some points, the efforts of Lewis and other student leaders will not be at fault. State constraints on University business simply do not permit what might seem logical to many, especially students. Perhaps this will be the first step at bridging this gap and making student concerns known at the top.

## SATs shame state N.C.'s faltering scores demand action

State officials have spouted off a lot of rhetoric about education in the past few years but have taken very little action, as last week's announcement that North Carolina ranks last in the nation in average Scholastic Aptitude Test scores shows. The state's superintendent of public instruction, Bobby Etheridge, presented a plan to help North Carolina's lagging school system after the announcement. But until education becomes a top priority for everyone in the state, much progress can't be expected.

Etheridge's plan calls for a task force on secondary education, for a school-by-school comparison of SAT scores, for more students to take the PSAT — a preliminary version of the SAT — and for students to take more rigorous English, history, math and science classes. While these are good first steps, North Carolina needs to make sure it doesn't treat the symptom and overlook the disease.

Our public school system has been in trouble for a long time, and focusing on raising SAT scores without looking at the bigger problem of a lack of an equal education for all students in North Carolina won't help us in the long run. State leaders are very aware that students in urban areas receive better educations and have more resources than students in rural areas. The Basic Education Program (BEP) attacks this problem, but delays in funding for part of the program make one question the priority it has been given. The N.C. Department of Public Instruction requested \$112 million and \$98.4

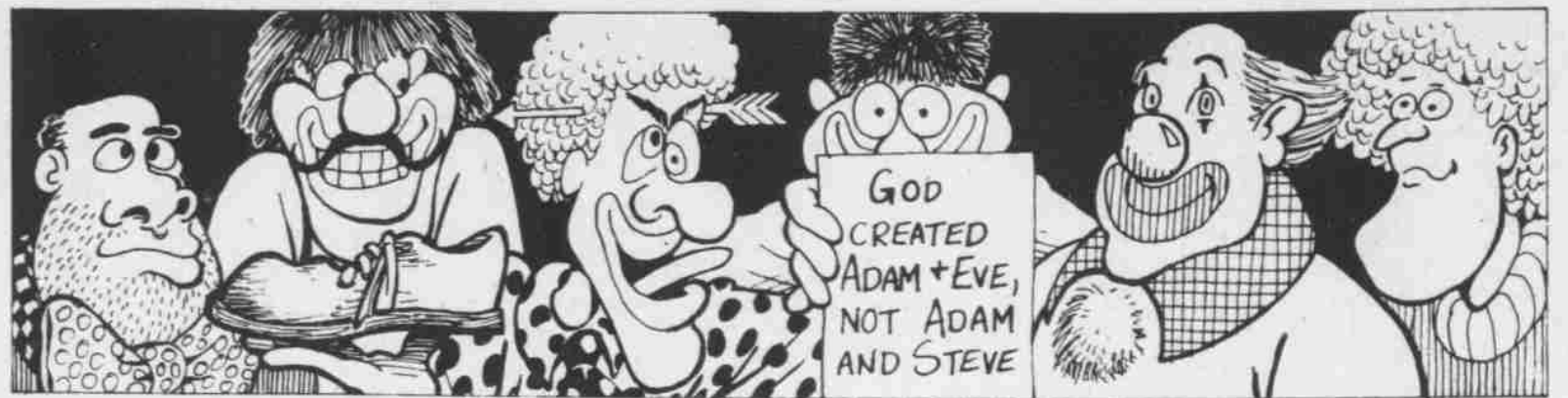
million to fund the BEP in 1989-90 and 1990-91, but the legislature approved only \$69.27 million for this year and delayed another installment of \$111.25 million until 1990-91.

The SAT scores force us to question the quality of education in North Carolina, and state officials need to implement plans to improve that quality before it gets any worse. South Carolina had ranked at the bottom of average SAT scores for years, but its score has increased 35 points since 1984 when a school improvement act was approved by the legislature. Under the act, South Carolina offered incentives to schools and teachers whose student test scores rose, increased math and science graduation requirements and required high schools to offer more advanced courses.

North Carolina needs to move in the same direction — quickly. We need to put education as a top priority, to develop strategies to improve the quality and equality of education in the state and implement them immediately, and we need to offer more challenging curriculums to our high school students and offer them incentives to learn and excel.

All this means that North Carolina needs a commitment to education — a commitment beyond the BEP. Instead of funneling so much money into new highways, we need to begin to concentrate on our students and the future of the state. Maybe last week's announcement was just what we needed to get moving. — Tammy Blackard

## UNC COLLEGE REPUBLICANS



PETE CORSON - DTH

What we do:

- harass homosexual groups and CIA protesters
- give a bad name to all Republicans
- sponsor the insipid "Shoe Day"
- amuse the campus with our ignorant antics

Some of our members even:

- have lunch with God every Thursday
- post immature fliers
- believe liberals are destined for Hell
- wear blue jeans
- misrepresent other campus groups

## IS THIS RATIONAL DISCOURSE?

This cartoon is political satire and in no way suggests that the UNC College Republicans are even capable of rational discourse.

## The pitfalls of handicapped access

Last spring I heard the University was planning to build a wheelchair ramp into the Pit. On April 12, I read in the DTH that the ramp, which was expected to cost \$18,000, would be part of the renovation of Student Stores and would be paid for by the stores.

"\$18,000!" I thought to myself. "That's pretty steep (Ha ha — get it?) for a ramp. And why build it into, of all places, the Pit?"

I read on. The ramp sounded pretty elaborate, which was one reason why it was so expensive. For one thing, it was designed to double as a speaker's platform. It would be T-shaped, descending from the top step of the Pit to a horizontal platform, and then to the Pit's ground level. In addition to providing a place for wheelchairs to make easy turns in either direction, the horizontal level would provide a soap-box for Pit speakers.

The story said nothing further about the cost. But I did learn the reasoning behind building the ramp. Rutledge Tufts, general manager of Student Stores, was quoted as saying, "The Pit is a real focal point of student life, and some students can't get down the steps. A ramp would allow these students to do that."

There was also a quote from Stuart Hathaway, then-chairman of Students for Educational Access (SEA). SEA is a student government executive branch committee that had been working for handicapped access ramps across campus. In the article, Hathaway said the ramp would be "the single most dramatic expression of commitment the University could give to handicapped students." Hathaway went on to say that he hoped the ramp would raise student consciousness of the plight of the handicapped.

The rest of the article was full of similar



Matt Bivens  
Rat Salad

praise for the ramp from other University officials. But by summer time, not everyone thought the ramp was such a great idea.

This June, a summer Tar Heel columnist questioned the need for a ramp into the Pit and was especially critical of the cost. For \$18,000, the columnist said, he'd gladly build the ramp and vacation in Hawaii on the change. And on July 20, SEA's Hathaway, while still supporting the idea of a ramp, also criticized the cost. The Tar Heel reported that, in a letter to University officials working on the project, Hathaway said the ramp "does not have to be mirrored or outlined in neon — a simple, gently sloping brick ramp will do."

Apparently these and other criticisms had some effect. The University has now moved to a simpler ramp, to be built on the side of the Pit adjacent to the undergraduate library. The new ramp is expected to cost \$10,000.

This still sounds like a lot of money to me, but Thomas Shumate, consulting architect for facilities planning and design, assured me it wasn't unusual. Shumate said it cost \$20,000 to build the ramp in the basement of the Student Union, and that was several years ago. Wheelchair ramps, it seems, simply cost a lot.

It's easy when dealing with something like this to be snide: the ramp goes nowhere, it's a stupid idea, anyone with a brain could find a better way to spend \$10,000, and so on. But

whatever you think about the ramp itself, the University officials behind the project deserve your respect. They don't stand to gain any personal benefit from the project, other than the knowledge that they've made an honest effort to improve the quality of student life.

At the same time, \$10,000 is still a lot of money — money that could probably be better spent on other handicapped access projects. Since 1974, the University has spent more than \$500,000 on improving handicapped access; but there are still buildings on campus that are inaccessible by wheelchair. Why not spend the \$10,000 on opening these buildings, instead of the Pit?

A wheelchair ramp into the Pit does make a much nicer symbol, a more grandiose statement, than a ramp into some dusty old building. Maybe that's why the ramp into the Pit has such an attraction for some people. But symbols, as we often seem to forget, aren't real progress. They're glittery and fun, and they make us feel good about ourselves — but when it comes to solid, concrete improvements of our daily lives, they're usually found wanting. And too often — as in this case — they divert our time and energy from more important projects.

With the new \$10,000 estimate, the ramp seems certain to be built. For obvious reasons, we shouldn't be too thrilled about this. But neither should we be too upset by it — even though there are better ways to spend this money, I admire the work some University officials have done to improve handicapped access. And I guess the University deserves a pet project in which it can showcase its commitment to handicapped students.

Matt Bivens is a senior political science major from Olney, Md.

## Readers' Forum

### Honor Court comic does not amuse

Editor's note: Dowling is the chairwoman of the Undergraduate Honor Court.

To the editor: Reading the comics should be a pleasurable experience. Unfortunately, this was not the case for me with the Sept. 18 edition of the DTH. The first strip on the comic page, "G.B.," by a certain Mr. George Brooks III, questioned the confidentiality of the Honor Court. This comic ranked right up there in humor level with those terrible Late Night T-Shirts that are littering the campus.

The comic strip, for those of you who pass right over it eager to read Calvin and Hobbes, depicted a student who was promised complete confidentiality within the judicial system. This same student in the last frame of the strip is seen reading about his court hearing in the DTH. Of course the

only humor in this comic is the impossibility of such a circumstance arising. It is so absolutely ludicrous to think that there is even a remote possibility that the DTH would have any information at all about a specific Undergraduate Court case that it is funny Mr. Brooks poses that as a possibility. Therein lies the true humor of the comic.

The Undergraduate Court practices a strict policy of confidentiality. No students, I mean no students, outside of those involved in a particular hearing have any knowledge of the details of the case. No one knows the name of the defendant, the circumstances surrounding the case or the charge. In fact, court members who sit on a particular case are not even allowed to discuss the case with other court members who were not sitting on that case. We respect the privacy of the students involved. It is their right to have a confidential system and to the best of our abilities we protect that

right. The only time any information is released to the DTH concerning Undergraduate Court hearings is at the end of the semester when we release — in very general terms to protect the identities of students involved — statistics on the cases heard over the course of the semester.

There are two things that make this comic particularly frustrating to me. The first is that this week is freshmen orientation week to the Honor Code. The Undergraduate Court and the Attorney General's staff are giving presentations for all the freshmen in their dorms. This is our week to teach the freshmen about our system. The comic strip sends the wrong message. It is the wrong message all of the time, but especially this week. The second unfortunate aspect of the comic is that we have just recently (as of July 1) added a new amendment to the Instrument of Student Government concerning a sexual assault offenses. It must be made clear to all people who believe

they have been sexually assaulted that our system is entirely, completely, through and through, confidential.

So once again, as in the case with the Late Night T-Shirts, I am proving that I have no sense of humor whatsoever when it comes to folks slamming our Honor System which is, to tell the truth, a system which allows us incredible freedom in our academic endeavors.

RUTH DOWLING  
Junior  
English/History

### Letters policy

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticisms. When writing letters to the editor, please follow these guidelines:

- All letters must be dated and signed by the author(s), with a limit of two signatures per letter.
- All letters must be typed and double-spaced, for ease of editing.

## Morrison retreat was money well-spent

Editor's note: Jackson is the president of the Residence Hall Association.

To the editor: I am writing in response to David Israel's letter of Sept. 19 ("Morrison officers use trip as a perk") concerning the use of Morrison Dorm's social fees for the area government retreat. I would like to make it very clear why the Residence Hall Association co-sponsors these fall retreats for every area on campus.

RHA and the area governments have annually gone on weekend planning retreats to fulfill at least two crucial needs. Primarily, social, cultural and academic events for the year must be planned, a determination of what is expected of all dorm officers has to be made clear and necessary information concerning RHA, funds, and rules and regulations must be distributed for those who need to know. Governments plan area events, community-service projects, dorm events and whatever else the dorm residents convey that they would like to see done with their dorm social fees.

The second reason that the retreats are taken is so that the government members will be familiar with each other and able to work effectively together. Any group with the indi-

viduality and diversity of class, knowledge of dorm government and background that area governments have must spend time getting to know each other in order to be able to work well together. To be successful, area government members must be motivated and feel comfortable working with one another and have at least a basic understanding of the body that they are working for and the group with which they are associated and represented by.

Mr. Israel also tends to think that dorm government officers "are being trained to expect perks for services rendered." The retreat is not offered as a perk or a bribe for getting people involved in government. Most government officers are not even aware of the retreat at the time of their election in the spring, so we do in fact know that they will work without this stipend. I disagree entirely that the retreat "destroys the spirit of volunteering." Unlike RAs, who receive a monetary reward and a single room as compensation for service to dorm residents, government officers receive nothing material for all of their hard work and dedication to serving their fellow student. And that is as it should be.

The benefits of the retreats greatly out-

weigh the costs. The total cost for all areas is less than 1 percent of RHA's total budget. Each resident pays less than 70 cents for the training of all of the area officers. For the cost of one glass of apple juice from the vending machine you will have educated, motivated, informed area government officers who will serve you for an entire year. Without a doubt this is money well spent.

Another problem with the letter is that Mr. Israel's main concern is that "this trip will affect the future of my friendships" with his friends who are government officers. The editorial page is not the place for personal problems between friends and I hope that he can resolve his problem without involving the rest of campus.

My final problem with Mr. Israel's letter is that he does not even live in a dorm, he lives in an apartment. He lived in Morrison for two years, but now that he is living off campus he has become so very concerned with the fees that on-campus residents are paying. I have to wonder why?

LIZ JACKSON  
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## The Daily Tar Heel

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