

The Daily Tar Heel

98th year of editorial freedom

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Sour grapes motivate complaint

There's trouble in paradise. Sparked by the complaints of a student denied admission to Duke University, the U.S. Department of Education is investigating charges that the university's admissions policy discriminates against white applicants.

Elizabeth Elkins, an Alabama resident denied admission to Duke, learned that a black classmate she considered less qualified than herself had been accepted to the university. She immediately filed a complaint with the education department. Elkins said she graduated 11th in her class and scored 1,180 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test; the student admitted to Duke, Kamaria Morris, said she graduated 18th, while scoring 1,130 on the SAT. Elkins is now enrolled in Jacksonville State University, while Morris is a student at Cornell University.

Duke admissions officials defend themselves, stating that their admissions policy is geared toward promoting campus diversity while shying away from quotas. The education department should complete its investigation by mid-December.

One can only hope the education department rules that Duke's admissions policy is not discriminatory. The charges brought by Elkins sound like the product of sour grapes. While it's true that Elkins' test scores and grades are slightly stronger than those of Morris, it is important to note that those are only two of several considerations in the admissions process.

The admissions office, which examines test scores, grades, recommendations, extracurricular activities and interviews, gives special consideration to North Carolina residents, children of alumni, athletes and minorities. Morris may have been more impressive than Elkins in interviews, on the essay accompanying her application or in any number of areas.

It may well be that Morris was selected instead of Elkins because of her race. And there's nothing wrong with that — especially when their qualifications in numbers were so close.

In fact, it's admirable that Duke is concerned with the diversity of its student body. The classroom experience is only one part of a university education; students stand to learn as much from one another as from professors. This is especially true if the students come from a variety of cultures. If a white male associates only with other white males, it is likely that his perspective and education will both be limited. Admissions policies such as Duke's strive to create an environment in which students can learn about and interact with people from other cultures outside the classroom.

When mid-December rolls around and the education department ends its investigation, let's hope that Elkins' racism complaint is dismissed.

Volunteering made easy

The United Way of Greater Orange County just started a great program this month, a program that will make volunteering easier for people who want to get involved but don't know how or where.

The Volunteer Center, housed in the United Way offices at NCNB Plaza, recruits and matches volunteers with non-profit and public organizations from a number of fields. It joins about 350 other volunteer centers throughout the U.S. that are bringing together people who want to help and people who need help.

The center should become an invaluable resource for volunteer organizations in the Triangle, because many people have always wanted to lend a hand but have not known where they were needed or what they ought to do. Now they need only give the Volunteer Center a call in order to find out about opportunities that fit their interests, their skills and the amount of time they can afford to give.

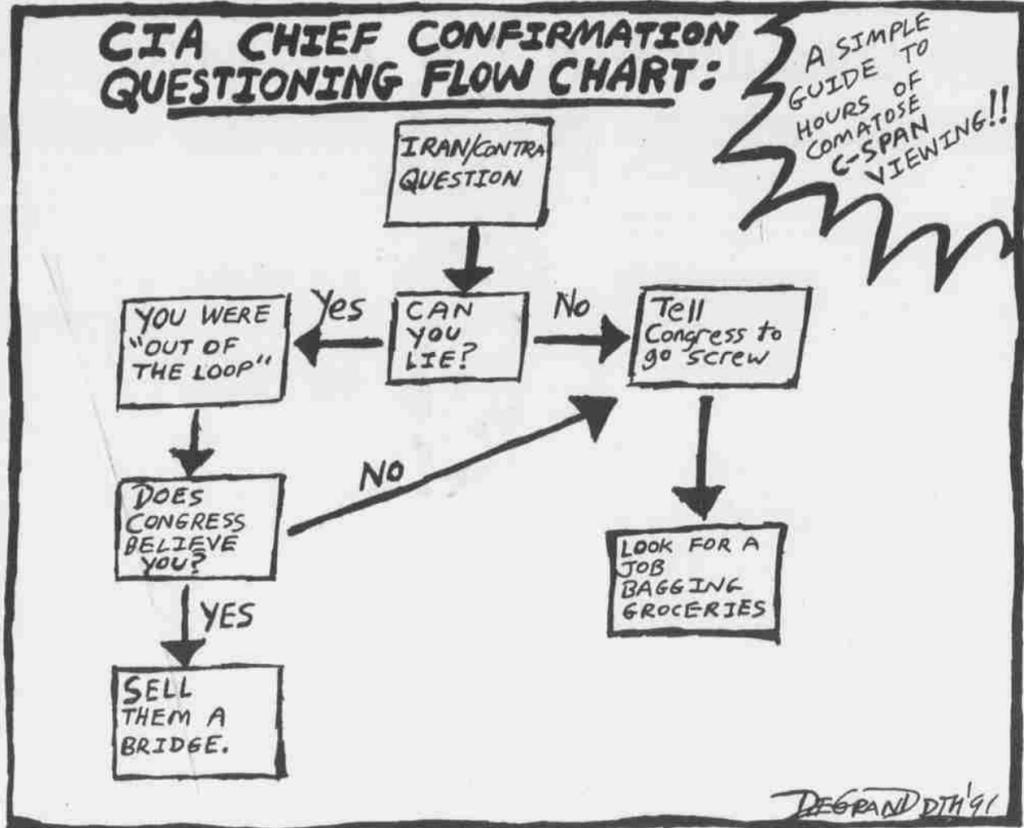
Who is the center looking for? Just about anyone who wants to help. For new residents in the area, volunteering is a great way to meet people and to find out more about the community. Retirees have time to give and a whole lifetime of experience and skill under their belts. Students, and this town has its fair share of them, lend their youthful energy to any project and can explore areas in which they expect to work professionally after graduation. No matter who you are or what you do, the

Volunteer Center has something for you. And there is certainly no shortage of fields in which to work. There are more than 125 organizations in Orange County that depend on volunteers for a wide variety of activities.

Youth services, the environment, counseling, elderly services, disaster relief, legal services, issues concerning the handicapped, the arts, sports and recreation — these are just a few of the many areas where volunteers are needed. Even the Volunteer Center itself is staffed by volunteers.

Volunteering time to worthy causes is one of the best ways a person can help improve the quality of life for the whole community. It costs nothing, it takes only as many hours as a person can afford to give, it makes good use of skills that members of the community already have and, most importantly, it is often a means of accomplishing things which would not otherwise be done.

Teaching adults to read or giving kids something worthwhile to do after school is of inestimable value to the individuals of the community, so giving up a few hours of spare time each week doesn't seem too high a price to pay. And now the Volunteer Center has made it easier for you to match your talents with an agency that could use your help. So give the Volunteer Center a call at 929-9837. They'll appreciate your help, and so will everyone else.



Big government monster descends on Chapel Hill

I have unsettling dreams. I'm walking in public, and I become aware of a presence all around me ... familiar yet disturbing. The feeling intensifies until it monopolizes my attention.

Soon I see it. Everywhere I turn, its gaze meets mine. The initial response is one of paranoia. An adrenaline rush, an impulse to flee juxtaposed to the knowledge that such an action would be futile. No threat seems imminent, yet I am fearful and apprehensive.

This monster is suddenly a part of everything in my life. I know it does not belong, and its latent presence makes me feel violated and strangely vulnerable. The aforementioned familiarity solidifies into a horrific realization that weighs heavy in my gut: this thing is of me. It is my own creation set free to grow to monstrous proportions until it is so massive as to be uncontrollable.

This is what threatens me now, and I feel like a helpless Dr. Frankenstein, wondering "What went wrong?"

I awake feeling slightly off-kilter, pause for a moment to reflect, then stumble off to the shower.

Dreams like this get me thinking about politics and the role of the government in America today. Yeah, I know it sounds pretty farfetched, but there's a twisted sort of logic in this, trust me.

To me, the government is similar to the monster in the dream. Originally an entity whose primary purpose was to stop people from infringing on each other's rights, it has grown into something incomprehensibly large by assuming more and more duties that were once the domain of private citizens. It is now so vast in its scope that nearly every aspect of our lives is touched by the hand of Uncle Sam in one way



Dave Meesters
Common Sense

or another. We cannot get away from it, even if we wanted to. Every day, I read about something new that the government is trying to legislate. Every day, we move a little bit closer to the extreme of totalitarianism. Every day, the knot in my stomach tightens a notch.

This is why I almost choked on some food the first time I read that the Chapel Hill Town Council was considering passing an ordinance requiring all cyclists to wear helmets while riding. I went to the hearing last week, and I heard many of the opponents of the ordinance speak about enforcement difficulties and other practical matters. But the question that immediately comes to my (and some of the other speakers') mind when I think about this proposal is, "What right do they have to pass this kind of legislation?" I will answer now as I answered then: they have none.

Let's take our friend, Bob, as an example. The only person who stands to lose from Bob's not wearing a bicycle helmet is Bob. If Bob does not wear a helmet, he is jeopardizing only his own safety — not the safety of his fellow cyclists, pedestrians, motorists, me, you or any member of the town council. Therefore, the decision about whether to wear a helmet should be Bob's alone, because he is the only one affected by the decision. (If you went to the hearing, you'll probably recognize this argument.) This seems like common sense to me, but some people don't see it this way.

The failure here is to recognize that Bob is a distinct individual, leading his own life. Life decisions that affect only him may never be decided by an outside authority, and Bob may never be lumped together with his neighbors and subjected to decisions made "for the good of the whole." This action is taking the decision-making process out of the hands of the individuals, those whom it affects, and placing it into the hands of a governing body that is now deciding what is best for us. Can you say "paternalism?"

The principle behind this legislation is that the government may prohibit dangerous activity, even if the potential negative consequences affect only the one who is performing the action. The government may outlaw risk-taking. Unhealthy diets, skydiving, playing the stock market, crossing the street, choosing a career and driving your car all involve risk-taking. The potential for parody is endless, since so much of a normal person's life involves taking risks. But that is part of the game!

Life presents everyone with a series of choices, and all of them involve some element of risk. How these decisions turn out is what makes our lives interesting and unique. It is what makes it *our* life. If we want to take a risk by riding helmetless or by doing anything that affects only us, then who is anyone else to say that we can't do that? The power to choose, the power to control our destiny, is all that we have! It is all that is truly our own. We can't let anyone else make those decisions for us. To do so would be to reject our very humanity.

Dave Meesters, a sophomore psychology major from Miami, doesn't really dream about politics.

READERS' FORUM

Letter lacks sensitivity, understanding of blacks

To the editor:
 Wade Newhouse, in his Sept. 13 letter ("Column lacks respect for artistic expression"), states that "the mistake that (Erika) Campbell makes (in her Sept. 11 column), 'Minorities can't always speak with unified voice' is that she attempts to place herself into the center of creations and ideas that were not intended to have anything to do with her." To the best of my knowledge, the Erika Campbell I know is still a black woman, which in essence makes her a part of "the artist's" intentions to create the black academia. If Campbell is not a part of "the artist's" recreation of the black academia on UNC's campus then what is the purpose of those well-sculptured statues?

It amazes me that an English education major (Newhouse) could be or pretend to be so "dumb-founded" about the purpose of art. The one universal concept all artists share is that art (paintings, sculptures, crafts, etc.) represents, recreates and preserves. In my opinion, and I do feel that I am qualified as an art major to say so, "the artist" fails to successfully represent, recreate and preserve the black academia.

In fact, the sculptures can easily be considered a mockery of the black academia on UNC's campus for the simple reason that they misrepresent the black men's and women's main priorities. To me, this is sufficient enough cause to react. Newhouse chose not to react, and I respect his decision, so it's only fair that he take a seat.

Even more, in his fourth paragraph, Newhouse misinterprets Campbell's main argument about Spike Lee's attempts "to recreate Malcolm X in an upcoming movie." Newhouse's lack of analytical thinking is once more hard to grasp, considering that he is an education major. Campbell simply debates Lee's failure to create an accurate image of Malcolm X or, in a more simple way of phrasing it (for Newhouse), he is creating an im-

age of Malcolm X that suits Lee's likes. At least in a history book, there is true documentation of proposed events and images. Life is given a chance at truthful portrayal. Under Campbell's logic, we should try to stick to concrete details and facts.

Finally, to answer Newhouse's question about what type of books Erika Campbell had to read; apparently, she read documented history books that offered concrete details. Unfortunately, the question still remains: what type of books did Newhouse have to read, and who wrote them?

It is true that most writers and artists use life as a scapegoat for achieving their effect. How could something (life) so universal be avoided? However, the style in which they choose to portray life is left to be debated in this time and age.

CORY L. BLUE
 Senior
 Speech Communications/
 Dramatic Arts

Suicide coverage short on content, compassion

To the editor:
 I write to voice my discontent with your poor coverage of the tragic death of Mr. Frank Bostancic.

Additionally, I wish to express my deep regret and to extend my sympathies to his family, friends and colleagues.

Six days after the fact, your paper produces an article thin in content and thinner still in compassion. This is unsatisfactory. Out of respect to the dead and his survivors, it is important that we not disregard his life and his choice to end it. No matter what your relationship was to Mr. Bostancic, his troubling death affects our entire community.

Suicide is a deeply disturbing phenomenon and is not at all easy to deal with. It is, after all, a very final cry of despair by the person concerned and often tends to carry the social stigma of failure writ large.

Failure, in the first instance, by the individual who clearly — for whatever combination of reasons — has concluded that the only way to escape his or her problems is by taking his or her own life. Failure by relatives, friends and colleagues who either did not recognize the signs of distress, did not hear the subtle cries for help or simply did not know of the pressures mounting on the individual. And last, failure by society, in the sense that, to the individual concerned, it held so little attraction that he sought to leave it in the ultimate gesture of no return.

In closing, please allow me to offer a more appropriate quote than your selection for Sept. 16.

"No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls: It tolls for thee." — John Donne, Meditation XVII

DUNCAN R. BOOTHBY
 Junior

Editorial convicts Tyson without benefit of trial

To the editor:
 In four years at Carolina, I have never read such an insulting and infuriating editorial as "Take up the fight against rape" (Sept. 17). I too believe that rape, more than any other violent crime, is an unforgivable trespass against the sanctity of a woman's body, and victims should be accorded with respect, care and privacy.

But should the rights of the accused be forfeited simply because he is a public figure? No! Until a jury decides otherwise, Mike Tyson is innocent of every charge levied against him. He should be allowed to continue living his life as he wishes.

A liberated society should abhor double standards in any form,

be they man to woman or public figure to private citizen. Unfortunately, public stature entails a certain loss of freedom, but that fact should not be celebrated nor used in defense of an argument.

By being nonchalant about the trial, Tyson is not necessarily evincing behavior of a man "capable of rape." He may simply wish to be quiet in order to fend off the tabloids, or he may be confident of his innocence.

No one has the right to say why Tyson behaves as he does. We can only guess. Is Tyson advocating sexual assault as something that is acceptable simply because he continues with plans to fight Evander Holyfield? Or is he simply trying to live his life as normally as possible, which in his case means boxing? No one knows, and the editorial staff has no right to sit as an omnipotent judge of his actions.

Aside from the comments made about Tyson, one aspect of this editorial was particularly derisive. The quote reads, "almost half of all men would commit rape if they knew they could get away with it." I do not know from where the study that concludes this originates, but I would certainly question its findings.

Are we to believe that almost one-fourth of our entire population would take perverse delight in violently penetrating, sodomizing and possibly murdering a woman if they knew they could get away with it? Bullshit.

This quote is a weak attempt to bolster an already weak argument that tries to judge Mike Tyson before he has the chance to be properly judged. Let Mike fight. If he is found guilty of the counts against him, let him rot for 60 years in prison.

JOSH TATE
 Senior
 English

Letters policy

- Limit letters to 400 words.
- Include your year in school, major and phone number.
- The DTH edits for space, clarity and vulgarity.

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The Daily Tar Heel

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