

## The Blue Banner's View

# Administration deserves kudos for open budget forum

In an effort to provide budget transparency, campus officials held a forum last week. The only thing missing was the audience.

The Student Government Association and *The Blue Banner* sponsored the forum, which offered the perfect opportunity for students and faculty to question administrators about spending cuts and tough decisions made regarding the allocation of funds.

It was a major step in the right direction for an administration often criticized for a lack of transparency.

Yet the only attendees were a handful of SGA representatives, Banner editors and several students.

It is both hypocritical and embarrassing of professors and students who complain about budget issues and a lack of transparency to not show up.

Administrators, including John Pierce, vice chancellor for finance and operations, and Bill Haggard, vice chancellor for student affairs,

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fielded and answered tough questions from participants following a presentation on the budget given by Pierce.

Banner editors posed questions regarding the Environment Quality Institute closing, allocation of student fees, funding for the Pisgah House and specific job cuts.

Haggard reported, for example, on several cuts in administrative staff, including the loss of the director of community relations and director of media services.

The lackluster audience means students and professors are more than happy to complain about issues to one another and behind administrators' backs, but they're also either too scared, lazy or both to engage officials in a forum.

*The Banner* has been critical of the administration in the past, but we aim to be fair. Administrators deserve kudos for partaking in such a forum, as does SGA President Cortland Mercer for following through on a campaign promise to make these forums a reality.

Looking at this on a broader scale, the lack of an audience means this campus doesn't value democracy.

Sure, it is a right to complain and do nothing about a problem. But it is a rejection of that same right to be critical and then do nothing when an opportunity comes along to challenge it.

So when class sizes get larger, positions are cut and students lose

extracurricular activities, don't complain. Don't say a word, because, in effect, this is the way you want it.

If you wanted something else, you would have attended the forum. Students should have filled the room and been lined up against the walls. Administrators should have been sweating over tough questions and critical observations.

But that's not how democracy works anymore. Instead of challenging campus officials, the theme now is to whine to friendly colleagues and fellow students while never investigating the facts.

Maybe we expect too much of this campus.

However, this is a liberal arts college focused on learning and viewing issues in a variety of ways. We can't accomplish that by staying behind closed doors.

What happened last week was nothing short of a failure on the part of faculty and students.

## The BLUE BANNER Editorial Board

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### Have a tip?

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