

Outsiders Threaten CGLA Funding

On Tuesday, October 11, members of Campus Watch, the new conservative group which hopes to defund CGLA through the North Carolina State Legislature held a press conference at the Carolina Inn. I went to find out how Hillsborough resident Ed Cottingham, Duke professor Krensky and UNC sophomore Peter Hans justified their claim that the UNC Student Legislature should not be allowed to decide how our student fees will be spent. After the press conference, I spoke to members of the press about CGLA's reaction to Campus Watch.

Campus Watch brought up familiar charges: that we're a political organization, that we promote homosexuality, and that the "traditional students" at UNC are forced to fund a "homosexual organization." I addressed these old charges as well as the uncommon proposition of defunding a student organization through the state legislature.

Ed Cottingham charges that CGLA is a "blatantly political" group, citing as evidence certain articles printed in LAMBDA that he considers to be political. He acknowledges our disclaimer in every issue but doesn't explain why he considers it invalid. Although the Daily Tar Heel also addresses political issues, he claims he has no intention of trying to get it defunded. Cottingham further calls us "radical" because our members are "energetic and given to parades," traits for which many groups might be commended.

Peter Hans seemed to focus on our social events when claiming that student fees are going to "subsidize sodomy and promote homosexuality." I explained that the Carolina Gay and Lesbian Association is an informative, supportive group which helps to raise funds by holding social events. Our group doesn't promote any kind of sexuality; it offers support to people of all sexual orientations. Many heterosexuals, for example, feel pressured into acting in ways that they don't feel comfortable (dressing, walking, etc.) for fear of being tagged a gay man or lesbian. Wouldn't it be nice if, instead of necessitating a denial, the label had no negative value? CGLA helps to create a positive image for lesbians and gay men in part so people can't be forced, by fear of labels, to conform to gender stereotypes. The "subsidizing sodomy" charge is false. So is the charge that student fees are paying for social events. Dances and parties are

fundraisers for CGLA. No student fees are spent on social events.

Campus Watch's final charge is that "traditional" student fees are going to fund a "homosexual organization." In case you're wondering what a "traditional" student is, Cottingham described her (remember, about 60% of the student body is female) as believing in "patriotism, the nuclear family, and America." Despite the fact that many CGLA members believe in these things, our funding should not depend on it. Rather, I would focus on the American tradition of a representative government that collects and appropriates taxes. Many supporters of representative government on campus feel it's hardly patriotic to take control of student fees from the legislators elected by Carolina students.

We fear that, by proposing that the state legislature monitor the student legislature's budget, Campus Watch may set a dangerous precedent. The group denied that it had plans to defund the Black Student Movement or the Daily Tar Heel, but it couldn't say why not. Cottingham said the group targeted CGLA because it came to their attention through the press last year. There is no guarantee that another student organization might not "come to their attention."

Outside involvement, in fact, is not without precedent. The state legislature imposed a speaker ban on the University in 1963 which subjected all speakers invited to campus to the state legislature's approval. Because university accreditation depends on part on autonomy, UNC's accreditation was threatened. Many students and faculty, including some who oppose CGLA funding, now resist Campus Watch as a group led by outsiders which threatens Carolina's autonomy.

--Liz Stiles.



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Rachel Franke, Treasurer, from the Gay and Lesbian Association at Wake Forest University; Jim Duley, Recorder, and Mark Donahue, Correspondent, both from the Carolina Gay and Lesbian Association at UNC-CH.

The nine universities represented at the meeting were Appalachian State University, Davidson College, NC State University, UNC-Charlotte, UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC-Greensboro, UNC-Wilmington, Wake Forest University, and Western Carolina University.