

At The Forum

by David Peterson

The meeting of the GLBT-SA on Thursday, February 8th featured the annual Student Body President candidates' forum, moderated by co-chairs Catherine Adamson and Taylor Brown with the aid of a Taboo buzzer. This was just one in a series of such events for the four candidates in which they voiced why each was the best choice to replace incumbent president James Allred, and pick up an endorsement to boot.

Although Allred didn't receive the GLBT-SA endorsement last year, he nevertheless voiced support for LGBTIQ issues in his platform, including scrutiny of the nondiscrimination policy, support for gender-neutral bathrooms, and advocacy for health insurance for the same-sex partners of University employees. As student body president, he's been an advocate for these issues and others.

Nick Neptune, a junior from Winston-Salem majoring in American Studies, opened the forum. He touted experience with the Public Service Scholars, the Committee on Student Life, and other areas of student government. Throughout the evening he emphasized diversity, specifically his hopes to bring various student groups into cooperation to address issues including race, gender, and sexuality. He also focused on two other main points: a reformed registration system and tuition. When asked what the most important issue facing LGBTQ students and their allies, he said "visibility", and stressed his hopes of working with the LGBTQ Center and other groups on campus, the GLBT-SA included. Though he hadn't been Safe Zone trained at the time of the forum, he expressed his intent to do so.

Caroline Spencer, a junior hailing from Wilson, NC majoring both in History and Political Science, noted her 3 years of student congress experience when explaining her focuses on expanding diversity, particularly with a grant to fund cooperation amongst student groups; revising the nondiscrimination pact; and improving men's basketball ticket distribution. She vociferously supports adding gender identity to the nondiscrimination pact, saying she would work to persuade the ad-

ministration, enlist the aid of campus legal services in examining protections, and she indicated that petitions and protests might follow if these strategies fail. She also specifically noted support for granting a course release to the director of Sexuality Studies.

Jon Kite, a junior in Communications Studies from Charlotte, extolled on his theme of "making UNC left hand friendly" during the forum. His campaign pushes for a shift in student ideology: he hopes to draw upon the spirit of 60's and 70's student activism to reduce student apathy regarding involvement in University matters. One offshoot of this is a privately operated website acting as an information clearinghouse for students. When the candidates were asked whether they supported adding political ideology to the nondiscrimination pact, he said he didn't support it, asserting that students should take personal responsibility for their statements and that discrimination based upon political ideology would be difficult to prove.

Eve Carson, wearing a rainbow "ally" pin, is a junior from Athens, GA studying Biology and Political Science. Her focuses are upon tuition, predictability, a revised registration system, and improvements to technological resources. She's undergone Safe Zone training twice, and 80% of her staff is Safe Zone trained, the highest proportion reported by the candidates. She voiced support for including gender identity in the nondiscrimination pact, and noted the positive impact of such a policy on university recruitment. She also suggested a student-created statement on diversity.

Ultimately, Eve Carson received the GLBT-SA endorsement and went on to win the student body election. Perhaps more exciting than any one candidate in particular is that all the candidates were allies: all of them expressed support for LGBTIQ student interests, all noted that they hoped to work with the LGBTQ center, and all voiced support for the push to include gender identity in the nondiscrimination pact. Thus, endorsement or not, the student body president will be a powerful advocate for all students, including LGBTIQ students and their allies.



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