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UNC-CH frat disputes First Amendment rights

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Last year Chapel Hill fraternity Alpha Iota Omega (AIO), who refused to sign the university's non-discrimination policy, sued UNC-Chapel Hill claiming that the school had violated their First Amendment rights by refusing to recognize them as a campus fraternity.

UNC-CH's non-discrimination policy states that it is the university's policy not to discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.

"We believe it's important for UNC to recognize AIO because in order for us to fulfill our purposes in serving other Greek-letter organizations and the campus as a whole, we would be more effective if we are recognized as a campus organization," said Jon Park, AIO Vice President and Treasurer.

U.S. District Court Judge Frank Bullock Jr. issued a preliminary injunction March 2 that gives AIO recognition from the school.

In an email interview Park said, "I do not think excluding students from AIO based on sexual orientation or religion is contradicting any principles of Christianity that value acceptance of all mankind."

AIO's reinstatement is temporary. Permanently reinstating the three-member fraternity as an official UNC-CH group gives AIO rights to funding from UNC-CH's Student Congress and access to university facilities.

SGA elections kick off on campus

Meet the Student Body Presidential Candidates



Dan Hacker | THE SEAHAWK

Bradley R. Ballou,
junior

"I look forward to working with all levels of our university to broaden school spirit and to support the traditions we already have in place and at the same time encourage new ones."

MAJOR: Political Science

Minors: English and International Affairs

SGA AFFILIATION: At-Large representative and Chief of Staff

MAJOR CAMPAIGN ISSUES:

- Tuition hikes
- Grading Scale inconsistencies
- Diversity
- Growth control for enrollment



Courtesy of Bart Wilson

Bartholomew T. Wilson,
sophomore

"I will lead and inspire others in making this a better place to live."

MAJOR: Chemistry, Honors Program

SGA AFFILIATION: At-Large Representative and University Affairs Committee Chair

MAJOR CAMPAIGN ISSUES:

- Construction
- Parking shortages
- Tuition hikes
- Growth control for enrollment

Student Body Presidential duties outlined in the Spring 2005 SGA Election Packet are as follows:

- 1) Presenting a State of the University Address at the first legislative session of each semester
- 2) Serving as a nonvoting ex-officio member of executive committees
- 3) Attending all UNCW Board of Trustee meetings and presenting quarterly reports on the SGA
- 4) Conducting all SGA planning board meetings; and attending all monthly meetings of the Association of Student Governments.

CARRIE VAN BRUNT

NEWS EDITOR

Election week has arrived and student body candidates are campaigning avidly around campus in order to gain the votes of their fellow students. The election week kicked off on Monday March 14th with a candidate's debate in Hawk's Nest. Voting began Tuesday, March 15th and will continue until 5 p.m. today.

Student Body President is the most critical position up for election this year as the elected candidate will serve as the Chief Executive Officer of UNCW's Student Government for a twelve-month term beginning at the end of the spring semester.

Other positions up for election this year include Student Body Vice President; Senior Class

Representative; Junior Class President and Representatives; and Sophomore Class President and Representatives.

"I am very impressed with all of the candidates that have been campaigning this year," said Rhonda Pennington, Election Board Committee Chair.

Student Body Presidential nominees, sophomore Bartholomew Wilson and junior Bradley Ballou, have been campaigning on campus since February 28th. Sophomore Jamie Anderson campaigned for Student Body President but withdrew her candidacy before elections began Tuesday.

Wilson's campaign has addressed concerns such as lack of parking and construction inconveniences.

Ballou has addressed issues

ranging from inconsistencies in UNCW's grading scales to diversity. He also plans to help UNCW reach out to local businesses by working to allow UNSea cards to be used off-campus.

Although both Ballou and Wilson have addressed many different issues during their campaigns, both candidates denounce campus-based tuition increases.

"The costs of higher education have been unfairly burdened upon the backs of students over the past few years," said Ballou in his ballot platform.

Another issue tackled by both Ballou and Wilson is the growth in student enrollment.

"Our campus is busting at the seams due to overpopulation," said Wilson.

Online voting capability has made the voting process easier for students in recent years.

Election Board Chair, Rhonda Pennington, said that "the percentage of students that usually vote in the SGA elections is roughly about eight to 11 percent, or equivalent to about 1,000 students."

Although it is undetermined whether online voting has increased student voting numbers, Pennington claims that it does allow students to vote at their convenience and allows the SGA to possibly reach more students through campus-wide emails that have the e-ballot link attached.

Election results will be announced Thursday, March 17th at 7 p.m. in the Hawk's Nest.

Students can cast their votes at <http://www.uncw.edu/sga/>.



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