

The Lance

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Printing by The Laurinburg Exchange Co.

Hamilton: Editor Not The Issue

To the Editor:

It makes me very angry and also somewhat appalls me that the student body, in its constant search for a martyr, has chosen to pounce on THE LANCE and particularly the editor as a response to an article and an editorial. As a student and a member of the inter-dormitory senate, I feel like the material printed in THE LANCE accurately reflected the information exchanged in this controversy. Isn't that the job of a newspaper, to accurately present in compact form the interactions of the campus? The fact is, the picture pain-

ted for the students by the Dean and the President is one of gloom and doom. It does look hopeless to read those letters. If this were just a matter of preference or pleasing the student body I would have long ago stopped the effort, but as the students look at it, it is no longer a question of politics but ethics. It is a moral question of right and wrong. Mark Smith deserves tenure on his merits and potentials and that's that. I don't feel a newspaper should be expected to decide moral questions of any kind. THE LANCE isn't the Village

Voice nor is the Sword of the Lord. What it is is an excellent piece of student journalism plagued with difficulties involving such minor things as typographical errors to major things like student apathy.

I appreciate the hard work that has gone into making a student paper of the caliber of THE LANCE and offer it my support.

In case you have missed it, I am not responding to an angry dialogue or a letter; I am responding to something more grassroots. That is the murmurs at the lunch tables

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Editorial Reply: A Defense

To the reader:

I have no quarrel with legitimate disagreements that people may have with what I said about the Smith tenure case two weeks ago. For the most part, though, public reaction has not been directed to what I said but to me personally.

Only Mr. Prust has made an attempt, in print, to address himself to what I said, and even his reply was littered with personality assessments which could have been deleted without doing any damage to his arguments.

Two other letters appeared last week dealing with me. Their implications that I am in the administration's vest pocket on this issue are totally untrue.

Curiously enough, a great majority of those who have so vigorously denounced me have done so because I refused to go along with what they wanted to hear. It is sad that the tolerance and open-mindedness toward different points of view of which St. Andrews is so proud exist only in the absence of controversy. One would think a free and open climate of debate would be considered a vital part of life in an academic community, particularly when the community is addressing itself to such momentous issues as those which confront us at this time. A divergent point of view should be welcomed as a means of furthering debate rather than attacked as prima facie evidence of treason.

The headline of the Smith story of two weeks ago, suggesting the momentum of the affair was decreasing, is interpreted as an attempt to undermine student involvement by minimizing the importance of the issue.

The wording of the headline was mine; the malicious intent was not. The large and frequent meetings and constant discussion of the previous week had, by the time of the article, given way to the slower pace of administrative channels. While the judgemental tone of the headline is conceded it is supported by the facts of the situation.

My statement that President Perkinson's letter to the Senate would contain a

refusal to reconsider his decision on Mr. Smith's tenure was based upon highly reliable information to which I had access. The information proved to be entirely accurate. To be criticized for accuracy because the facts are not what one wants to hear suggests at least a philosophical support on the part of many for a return to the Biblical practice of slaying the bearers of bad news.

One of last week's correspondents, Ms. Tillson, berated me for mentioning a letter I had not seen. She is correct. I never saw it. For that matter, I have never visited the Great Pyramid, but I know what it looks like. My information of the contents of the letter, which was sent to the Board of Trustees by a group of art students, came from a reliable source and I took advantage of it. As was the case with the president's letter, the account in THE LANCE was based on reliable information that was subsequently proven to be true. In neither case was I guilty of any error in fact or judgement; I simply passed along the facts.

All of what the article said about the February 4 meeting of the Senate, at which Dean Arnold appeared, was fact as well. Some of the questions were indeed loaded, as any relatively open-minded person present at the meeting was undoubtedly aware. Students who expect me to zealously seek out and print the failings of administrative figures should expect me to take note of their shortcomings as well. No one is perfect. No one involved in this affair is a candidate for sainthood just yet.

It should be clear that in no instances was there any attempt on my part to, in a deliberate and partisan manner, damage the efforts of those supporting Mr. Smith.

Let us now review my editorial. My comments were meant to absolve the Dean only to suggested violations of his authority. As the tenure procedures are now set up, the Dean was apparently within his rights and I said so. For a final evaluation, though, we shall have to await the Personnel Committee

report as I said in the editorial - a report which, as I also observed, may well prove me wrong.

On the larger issue in question here, I do not now and never have supported the idea of an administrator dictating to the faculty. At best this notion is presumptuous, which is why I called for a definitive public exposition of the true extent of the Dean's veto power. This and other suggestions seem to have been lost in the extraordinary emotional climate generated by the affair.

By his own admission at the Senate meeting of February 4, the Dean is basically an administrator who spends next to no time in the classroom or in, it might be added, situations in which he could really judge the activities of faculty members as well as one's faculty peers could. The notion that from this rather narrow view the Dean's ability to judge faculty performance is so much better than that of other faculty members that he should be able to overrule them at will is ridiculous and ought to be clarified in its scope as I suggested two weeks ago.

On the question of due process, then, I think that Mr. Prust and I are in disagreement only in that my definition of due process was much stricter than his. On the larger issue I think we are substantially in agreement.

Back, now, to the main issue. I have never supported the administration's decision to refuse tenure to Mr. Smith. As a member of the Senate I have supported the actions that body and the Cabinet have taken from the beginning.

The President and the Dean say that they had ample reason for making the decision they did. They refuse to cite these reasons because of ethical considerations: it would not be proper to itemize Mr. Smith's inadequacies in public. They are also under orders from the college counsel to avoid public discussion of the case because it could have them open to damaging legal action if the matter were to find its way into the courts.

The President and the Dean

further justify their actions on the grounds that this is a rare case as defined in the faculty bylaws:

"The governing board and president should, on questions of faculty status, as in other matters where the faculty has primary responsibility, concur with the faculty judgment except in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be stated in detail."

A satisfactory explanation of why this is a rare case has never been forthcoming. The administration tends to drop back on the other two reasons, for which in all fairness, there is something to be said. I can't think of anyone who'd want Mr. Smith's reasons for being denied tenure dragged out in public unless he chose to do so himself. Equally reasonable is the desire of the President and the Dean to protect themselves from damaging legal action by not commenting upon the case prematurely.

Acceptance of these two reasons, however, are based upon acceptance of the premise that there were reasons for denying Mr. Smith tenure. I am willing to accept this premise not out of any malice for Mr. Smith or insensitivity to his talents, but rather out of an unwillingness to make a decision on the basis of an incomplete set of facts. I have not yet heard the president's reasons and am willing to wait until they can be released in a manner that will not embarrass or do injury to Mr. Smith (One can't help but note, however, how much easier this entire affair would have been to manage if the Dean had stated his reasons for opposing Mr. Smith before the Committee on Leaves, Promotions and Tenure and argued them there with the other members instead of sitting there, letting them approve them, and then rejecting the recommendation.) Because of remarks made by Mr. Tauber, and others, at a recent Senate meeting and elsewhere indicating the strong possibility of the release of the Personnel Committee report by Mr. Smith, I have hesitated in the editorial to embrace his cause, thinking that in time the issuance of the report would make the facts available in their entirety without the need for action "outside channels",

as it was often described in the Senate. One would hope that the report will indeed be made public so that we can look at the thing with all the facts in hand. If the report does not show compelling reasons for denying the professor tenure, I will be at the president's door along with everyone else. Until that time, though, I withhold judgement. I will not assume that Mr. Smith should be given tenure simply because there are no immediately handy reasons why he should not be.

This should explain how I arrived at what I said in points 1, 2 and 3 of the editorial's first section. Point four should be self-explanatory. It should be clear that the observations I made in all of the editorials were observations based upon careful examination of the various perspectives of the case and resulted in conclusions which, were mine and mine alone.

My reasons for opposing a boycott are self-explanatory. It would cause a host of problems larger in dimension and longer in duration than the problem they seek to cure.

My suggestion that the Smith affair be written off was an overreaction to the situation and I withdraw it with my apologies for the unintendedly callous tone it conveys.

I hope these explanations have contributed to and clarified the general conception of what I said, and what I meant to say, two weeks ago. I hope it will show that I have done my job as well as I could and that I have not been a party to any schemes to help out the administration on this matter. While THE LANCE is by definition a student newspaper, I cannot bend to the expectations of many students that coverage be slanted to favor what they perceive as the student view, for the simple reason that unless it can be shown that every single student is of one mind on an issue, there is no such thing as a student view. To favor one version of a "student view" is to put down others, and in so doing say to all that THE LANCE has been

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