

# Student Voices...

Scott Sorrell's  
Soapbox

*A little learning is a dangerous thing,  
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian  
spring:*

*These shallow draughts intoxicate the  
brain,*

*And drinking largely sobers us again.*

----- Alexander Pope

There are, indeed, many people at the university who flaunt their paltry intelligence, who place themselves on pneumatic pedestals proclaiming their academic prowess, unrivaled acumen, and superior cerebration. Anyone can do that, really. I just did. I did what many professors here do quite frequently, use big words to disguise a very simple message.

Enter a terrible tragedy of sorts. There are many professors at the university who fortuitously engage in intellectual snobbery. The facade of which I speak is only, I believe, a minor symptom of a much grander, deadlier illness: apathetic instructors.

As the university professes to be a great marketplace of ideas, it's simply amusing to note how close-minded some professors can be. By now, I am sure, many professors have already turned the page from what they will probably label cynicism. Yes, it was I. I said it. There are professors, almost as numerous as nonchalant students, who, quite honestly, do not care about their own constructive input, who are indifferent to the many students they should supposedly guide, and who care only from whence their next paycheck is coming.

I am writing this article on behalf of students who have had the

regretful experience of observing a potentially interesting class be ultimately ruined by an ineffective instructor. Regardless of the number of degrees a professor has obtained, any refusal or inability to convey clearly the substance of these many degrees to us, the students, undermines, to an extent, that professor's own educational achievements. Professors should be judged on their ability to teach. I, personally, am happy to say that most of my professors, past and present, have been strong academically and have also been effective teachers.

To a certain extent, it is the exchanging and/or communicating of ideas and principles that underlies education. I, personally, am quite taken with the notion of the Socratic method of teaching. The Socratic atmosphere is such that the teacher's lofty position is abandoned. The teacher joins his students, not as an equal, but as an overseer of discussions. The teacher then guides the class in whatever direction he/she so chooses, injecting substantive

points that the less-experienced students happen to overlook. The teacher embraces the spirit of the process by which students grow mentally. The students, who naturally respect and admire the teacher, soon begin to embrace the knowledge, and thus begin to want to learn. One of the many failures of our existing educational system is that so much emphasis has been placed on the analysis of the students' psychological and sociological propensities that the present system has almost abandoned the importance of instilling academic desire into students.

Someone will inevitably question my particular interpretation of apathy. Insofar as I am concerned, I would define an apathetic instructor as one who:

1. displays an unwillingness to answer valid questions from the students.

2. insists on passing irrelevant, wanton, non-academic comments to the class (i.e. racial slurs, sexist slurs, etc).

## UNC-CH SUMMER

Be a Carolina Tar Heel!

Session I: May 19-June 24, 1994

Session II: June 28-August 2, 1994

Students from any college or university, teachers, rising high school seniors, and others who are not enrolled at UNC-CH may apply as Visiting Summer Students for the first, second, or both sessions.

UNC-CH offers, during two 5 1/2 week sessions, over 900 courses in 45 disciplines. A typical course load per session is 6 semester hours.

Some evening and night courses and three-week short courses are offered. Spaces still available in three-week Summer School Abroad programs.

Approximate Cost per session: tuition and fees of \$115 PLUS \$49 per credit hour for NC resident undergraduates or \$323 per credit hour for nonresidents undergraduates.

When requesting a catalog and application, please mention seeing this ad in *The Broncos' Voice*.

Summer School

CB#3340, 200 Pettigrew Hall

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3340

Phone: 1-800-UNC1-123 or 919-962-1009

Fax: 919-962-2752.

EEO Institution