

PRO-TUITION INCREASE

□ Tuition increase will give Meredith prestige and boost it to competition's level.

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Meredith will increase tuition, and students will reap benefits

When I picked up a copy of the *Meredith Herald* a few weeks ago, I was not surprised to find that the front-page article addressed the school's tuition increase.

As the article explained, many students oppose the increase and are sensitive to the extra financial burden it may cause.

Although I can understand their position, I am a supporter of the tuition increase and think we have ignored the positive points about this issue.

The tuition increase will generate resources that we can use for future building improvements.

As students, we see building improvements every day when we walk past the construction of the new Math and Science building. This building, which will provide better classrooms and more advanced technologies, serves as a tangible reminder of the benefits facility upgrades can bring.

The increase will also help us maintain our quality teaching staff without sacrificing our low student-teacher ratio. This ratio, which allows small class sizes and close relationships between teachers and students, is one of the cornerstones to the Meredith experience. If we want to keep it low and, at the same time, want to maintain quality teachers, we must have sufficient resources to foot the bill.

When thinking about the tuition increase, we must look at our low tuition costs in comparison to other schools. For example, in this year's poll of the North Carolina private colleges and universities, the cost of Meredith is ranked 15th. Even after we factor in the proposed tuition increase for the 2003-2004 school year, Meredith would still cost less than schools such as Salem, Guil-

ford, and Warren Wilson.

We should remember that Meredith must keep its standards high in order to attract qualified students.

This is especially important because our student body draws primarily from this state and from areas close to the state's borders.

These prospective students must choose Meredith amidst the competition of the many nearby and outstanding schools, including Carolina, State, Wake Forest, Davidson and Elon.

As a collective group of students, we know that Meredith's future standards will affect our plans after college.

Those of us who want to go to pursue education after college in graduate school or law school, for example, will want other institutions to know that Meredith graduates are serious students who have attended an academically rigorous school.

Those of us who plan to enter directly into the workforce will want our prospective employers to be aware that, as Meredith graduates, our application should be taken seriously.

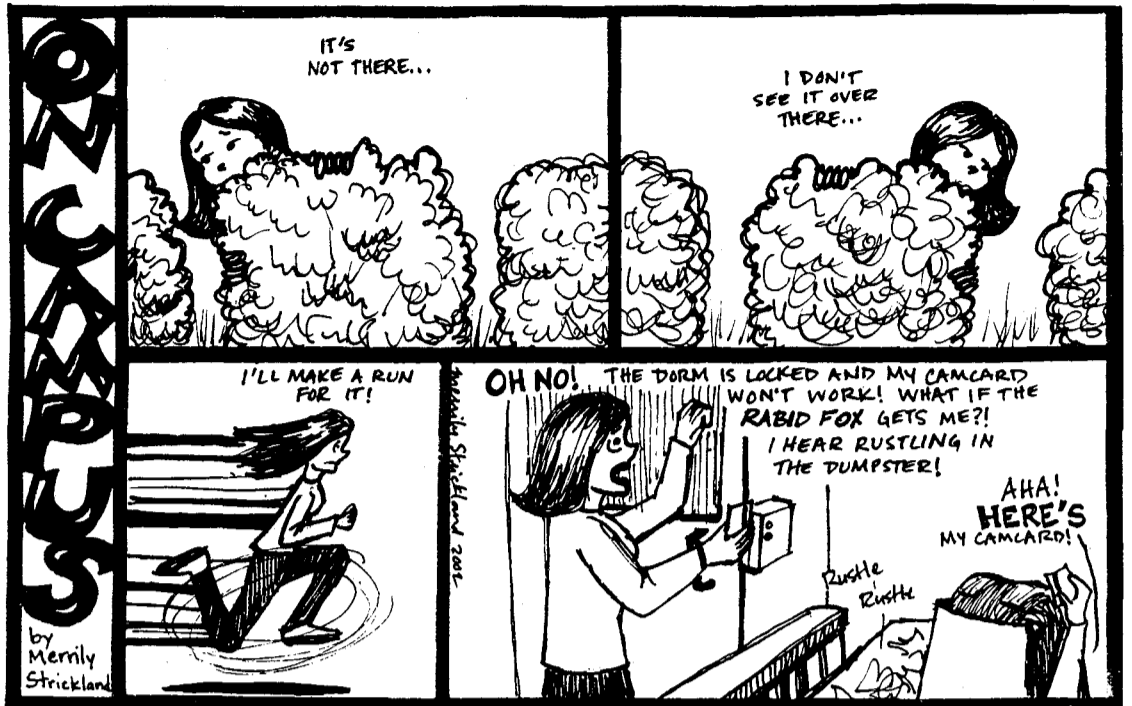
However, as individual students, we may not want to bear the financial burden of the tuition increase.

We might think that we are willing to sacrifice building improvements and quality faculty in order to keep the money in our pockets.

But what, I wonder, will we think thirty years from now? When we were presenting an employer with our resume or sitting down with a colleague for lunch.

The statement, "I went to Meredith College," would not be treated with the same degree of respect that it deserves.

To avoid this, we should work to improve our school's standards and provide it with the resources of the tuition increase. The school's prestige will rise, and with it, the prestige of our diplomas. The tuition increase provides us with a tool to build an even stronger foundation for academic excellence. Instead of protesting it, maybe we should be glad it is happening.



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