

The Daily Tar Heel

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Stop Stalling Search

Who needs a vice chancellor for student affairs anyway? That's what administrators are telling us by their indifferent attitude toward the search to fill the post left vacant when Donald Boulton retired more than year ago.

The dean in charge of finding a replacement still has not hired a firm to sort through the fewer than 50 applications in hand.

There is no excuse for leaving the vital division of student affairs to atrophy within the University's administrative structure without a permanent vice chancellor to lead it.

Interim Vice Chancellor Edith Wiggins has stayed the course at student affairs since Boulton retired. But as a temporary leader, she does not have the authority to make bold changes.

Student Affairs is the administrative unit most crucial to the quality of life of UNC students. Housing, student government, transportation,

the Student Union and the Campus Y are among the organizations under the authority of the division of student affairs.

It took a long time for the division of student affairs to reach the level of respect it now has. But if student affairs totters along without a permanent leader, the division will lose the stature it was beginning to build.

The chairman of the search committee, Stephen Birdsall, originally said we would have a new vice chancellor by January.

Now he says there is no time limit on the search. At the same time, Birdsall himself is up for review. He should aim to put a close to the vice chancellor search before his own term as dean finishes.

Student affairs need a dynamic, strong and impassioned leader who cares about UNC's 24,000 students, and we need that leader soon.

Unmerited Merit Pay

The basic principle of positive reinforcement rewards "good behavior." If all goes well in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro school system next year, Superintendent Neil Pedersen could reap hefty bonuses — more than 10 percent of his 1995-96 base salary — for his good behavior.

Last week, saying a goal-and-incentive program would result in greater accountability of the superintendent to the schools, the school board approved Pedersen's merit-pay package, proposed by the superintendent himself.

Though greater accountability is a noble goal, board members should have thought the proposal through before passing it. True, Pedersen is in charge of the entire school system, but why should he be rewarded for improvements that are largely out of his control? A test-score bonus, for example, relies more on solid teaching and attention to individual students than on Pedersen's daily administrative duties.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro system is already one of the best in the state. Only genuine efforts will keep it that way. If Pedersen will get a bonus for one specific program, he might neglect other, just as necessary, programs whose implementations aren't attached to a couple thousand dollars.

In the past, the superintendent has received merit pay based on less-specific goals, while his contract limited other bonuses. But during the next academic year, he could stand to gain up to \$9,000 extra if specific goals are met.

A sincere desire to improve the school system and achieve the school board's goals should be a necessary quality of any good superintendent, not contingent on monetary awards. Using cash as motivation does not keep this desire true; it suggests instead that the futures of Chapel Hill and Carrboro children are not enough incentive to improve the quality of their education.

Open Arms, Closed Wallets

The poor, tired, huddled masses immigrating to the United States should not assume we will welcome them with open arms, at least if we follow the lead of recent Republican legislation in Congress.

This legislation makes it more difficult for children of legal — legal — aliens to qualify for Head Start child care. Instead of determining financial need on the basis of family income, the legislation uses calculations including the income of the person sponsoring that family.

Legal aliens who would otherwise qualify for subsidized child care may not be able to rely on their sponsor to provide the financial assistance assumed in the proposed calculation. Even if they can, this reliance perpetuates institutionalized dependence on another person, pushing them further from financial independence.

Immigrants who cannot raise money for child care will be forced either to stay home or, more likely, to leave their children untended while they work to make ends meet.

Leaving children alone takes away the opportunity to learn a new language, customs and ideals. By making it more difficult to attain this early exposure, Congress is initiating a vicious cycle of unequal opportunity.

Ironically, the legislation was also meant to curtail Pell Grants to college-bound legal aliens.

Congress decided, however, not to cut higher-educational opportunities, forgetting the serious handicap they will create by limiting Head Start. If legal aliens can overcome this early handicap and excel in later schooling, then the government will help them. Yet, one must first have the skills to qualify for a college education — skills developed in childhood — before fretting over how to pay for college. Congress is pruning the seedling while agreeing to fertilize the tree.

Legal aliens provide an easy target for budget cuts, as they should not necessarily receive the same benefits as tax-paying citizens. This does not mean they will not stay in the country. Tax-paying citizens will be faced with a growing number of people who have been forced into poverty by the denial of equal opportunities, whether in education or in the job market.

Cuts must be made in the budget, but Congress should not take the easiest route. If they do, their constituents, whose ancestors were once themselves part of a tired, huddled mass, must let them know how it feels to be unemployed.

Political Third Party Must Challenge Assumptions

I feel compelled to write on an issue which is of critical importance in American politics today but which seems to be in danger of being co-opted by the establishment and thus defused before it is ever given a chance. This issue is the question of the need for a third political party.

It seems everyone today agrees with the need of such a party as an "alternative" to the two established ones. People regularly bemoan the fact that there is no real choice in American politics — either they say the two parties leave a significant number of Americans feeling unrepresented, or that the Democrats and Republicans are really only two wings of the same party. They are both correct. The problem, however, is not in the recognition of the problem but in its proposed solution.

Ross Perot has been the focal point of calls for a third party ever since his dramatic challenges to both George Bush and Bill Clinton in 1992. With his latest emergence onto the political stage he has promoted the idea of actually forming a much-demanded third party. He is being hailed by many as a savior of the American political system. Even those who do not agree with his politics point optimistically to the fact that he is at least opening the door for other potential party options. In my opinion, however, Ross Perot signals doom for any chance at a genuine third-party movement in this country.

The third-party movement of Ross Perot will serve the function of ending a debate which, if it was ever really discussed to its logical conclusion, would make many Americans think twice about their "frustration" with the two-party system. Why do we need a third party? Is it really so we can finally pass such earth-shattering, revolutionary reforms as term limits, the line-item veto or a balanced budget amendment? Is that

all? Can't the Republicans do that just as well as Perot? Is it a whole new party we need, or simply Ross Perot's cut-throat negotiating ability? If this is the kind of dramatic change that gets Americans excited, then we really are in trouble.

No, what is really needed is not another establishment group to wedge itself into the ever-narrowing gap between the Republicans and Democrats. What is needed is a party which — dare I say it? — actually challenges the system. Is the American, capitalist, big-business system the only possible one? Do people still think we really have true democracy, when it takes treasure chests filled with cash supplied by the likes of the tobacco industry and the NRA (to name just a few of the less than savory interest groups out there), just to run for office?

Believe it or not, I am not a socialist. I have never been accused by anyone of being one, and most who know me would laugh at the thought. Nevertheless, I do believe strongly in the need for a group that challenges some of the fundamental assumptions shaping our current political culture. I relish the thought of a party that would make politicians like Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich face the intellectual challenge of justifying their policies before genuine Social Democrats, rather than their punching bag, Bill Clinton, whom they have ludicrously labeled a socialist. If they are truly up to the challenge, let them defend capitalism and perhaps even reform and improve it as a viable option to socialism. This would be genuine reform and not the smoke and mirrors they are trying to pass off on us now.

The danger I see in Ross Perot's movement is that he might succeed — and when he does, the debate on the third-party issue will end. After all,

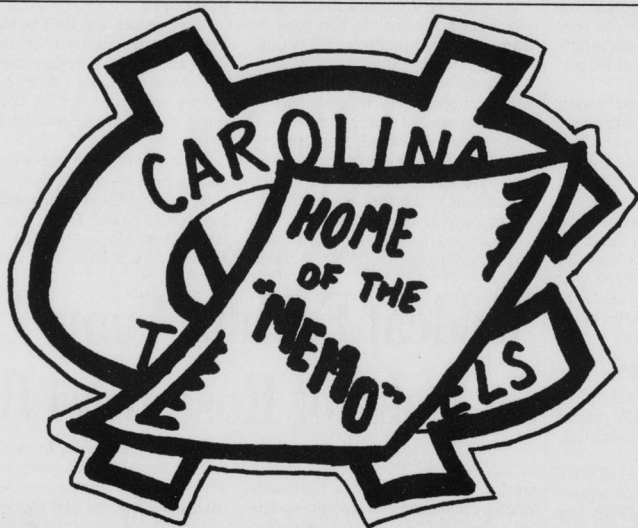
we will have one then, right? Wrong. We will have what is desired by the establishment — another chip off the same block but draped, as are the Republicans and Democrats, in a fig leaf conferring "independent party" status.

Let's face it — United We Stand does not want fundamental change any more than the Republicans do. They want to perpetuate the system by adding a nip here and a tuck there. In the end, the perpetuation of the system means the continued suppression of any possible challenges to that system.

What's the solution? I cannot say for sure. It will obviously take something other than Ross Perot's billions of dollars to change the system fundamentally. What it will certainly require is for the people to stand up and be counted. You must realize how the system works and how politicians convince you they are working to "fix" it, when all they are doing is guaranteeing their own survival through the maintenance of the status-quo and the large corporations which sustain them. Don't let Ross Perot's "outsider" rhetoric fool you. For those who want genuine change, or at least an open discussion of alternatives (near impossibility in mainstream political culture), Ross Perot is one of the greatest dangers around.

Real change is possible. But first people must become aware of the existing limits to its realization and shatter them. The fact that a social democratic, third option is, for the most part, not even a viable topic of political discussion in America should make people stop and think about the wide-open democracy they are supposed to be living in. Hopefully this column will open some eyes.

Richard Frankel is a graduate student in history.



REJECTED NEW LOGO FOR UNC-CH

Attention Campus Politicos: It's Almost That Time Again

Editor's Note: The author is chairwoman of the Student Government Elections Board.

TO THE EDITOR:

Now that the election excitement has died down, I would like to thank the 1,634 students who came out to vote on Nov. 14. In the depths of midterms, however, it is almost time to look ahead to Student Government's General Elections in February. I would like to invite all those interested in the elections process to get involved. It is a very complex process; however, it is very rewarding and, I think, a lot of fun. If you are interested in campus elections, or just have a comment for the Elections Board, come by Suite C in the Student Union, or call me at 962-5201.

Amie Stuart
SENIOR
ECONOMICS

Give Thanks for Hockey, Love and Marty Pomerantz

TO THE EDITOR:

Thanksgiving is a great holiday, eh? There's nothing quite like sitting around a sturdy oak table on a wholesome autumn day with a whole bunch of friends, family and plump turkeys. Sorry, was that redundant? No sir-ee, you just can't beat that! (Except maybe for summer vacation, spring break, Christmas break, Martin Luther King Day, the Labor Day weekend or a good game of hockey).

This Thanksgiving, my friends and I went around the table telling each other what we were thankful for. When it was my turn, I teared up and said, "I ... SNIFF SNIFF ... wanna say ... SNIFF SNIFF ... thank the heavens above for ... SNIFF ... Marty Pomerantz, the director of intramural sports because he gave us hockey again!!!"

Then I started to cry uncontrollably and had to excuse myself from the table. After a good solid half-hour "happy cry," I came back to the table, lifted my chilled goblet of mead and shouted, "Hallelujah!!! Amen!!! I say REJOICE brothers and sisters!!! Amen!!! Then, I drank and cried some more. There was much rejoicing.

This was because no more shall Mr. Pomerantz's most noble deed go unnoticed and uncelebrated. I rejoiced because this man is unbelievably understanding. Mr., excuse me, St. Pomerantz converted an old, run-down tennis court into an ethereal, inspirational gathering place for those who love the game (and it sure ain't baseball). He swung a deal with Michael Kline, the gracious director of Transportation and Parking, and divinely created a beautiful asphalt rink that's located just south of Craig parking deck and open every day after 6 p.m. Marty must have thought, "If I build it, they will come." Most weekends it's available, are you ready for this, all day! But wait, there's more! It has lights, so we can play hockey all night too! Whoooooo hooooo!!! (Actually only until 11 p.m.)

This ordinary man they call Marty is indeed



READERS' FORUM

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticism. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 400 words and must be typed, double-spaced, dated and signed by no more than two people. Students should include their year, major and phone number. Faculty and staff should include their title, department and phone number. The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for length, clarity and vulgarity. Bring letters to the DTH office at Suite 104, Carolina Union, mail them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 or e-mail forum to dth@unc.edu.

have cried foul. They insist that recent Supreme Court rulings prohibit such treatment.

However, if you go back to the Supreme Court decision made last June which makes funding of campus religious organizations possible, you'll see why the Student Congress acted rightly in denying funds to IVCF and MSA.

The court's decision was a triumph for freedom of speech. The religious organizations had won what all Americans deserve: a level playing field in the realm of public debate, in which all student organizations, religious and non-religious alike, had equal opportunity to express their views.

So, if student groups have the right to University funding for expressing their views, why is the IVCF's policy of requiring statements of belief from its officers not acceptable to constitutional law?

In the Rosenberger vs. University of Virginia decision, the court drew an important distinction between a "student publication," which has a right to funding, and a "religious organization," which does not.

The university is obligated to protect the speech of religious students, but it is not permitted to promote religious organizations in themselves. Religious students are fundable; churches are not.

When Intersvarsity and the Muslim Students Association require members or officers to make a declaration of faith, they are in effect behaving like a church. Rather than providing a means of expression for their members, they are imposing a religious dogma.

They cross a very thin line, ceasing to be an organization devoted to "news, information, opinion," etc., and becoming a bona fide "religious organization" primarily focused at promoting a particular faith.

This might seem like silly hair-splitting, but it is in fact the critical linch-pin of the Supreme Court's decision in the case. Only by drawing such a distinction can the law provide freedom of speech for all students, regardless of religion, without raising the specter of state-sponsored churches and the loss of religious freedom.

Student Congress did the right thing; by fully abiding by the Supreme Court's ruling, they took the course that protects the rights of all students.

Kevin Marks
MEDICAL STUDENT

Protecting Speech Does Not Justify Funding Dogma

TO THE EDITOR:

Religious and non-religious factions of the campus community seem to eye each other with mutual fear and distrust. The tensions between the secular society and religious faith were nowhere more clearly apparent than in the recent protests surrounding the funding of religious groups here at UNC.

This year, Student Congress denied funding to the Intersvarsity Christian Fellowship and the Muslim Student Association, because they required members to profess a particular religious faith before they could become leaders of the organizations. Many religious groups, feeling that their deeply held beliefs are under attack,

Last Call

The editorial board of The Daily Tar Heel is looking to fill its ranks for the spring semester. We are looking for good writers with strong opinions and a burning desire to cut through all the crap.

If this sounds like you, please come by the DTH office in Suite 104 of the Student Union and pick up an application. They are available in the front office and are due today.

Members will be selected by Dec. 4 and begin work when classes resume in January. Direct questions to Editorial Page Editor-select Jeanne Fugate or Editor Thanasia Cambanis at 962-0245.

Think about it over your coffee, then get cracking.

Georg Buehler
CONTINUING EDUCATION

THE DAILY TAR HEEL

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