The Daily Tar Heel

Wednesday, November 6, 1996

Jeanne Fugate EDITOR Office Hours, 2-3 p.m. Fridays



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BOARD EDITORIALS

Xpressed concerns

■ While student opinion is important in planning P2P Xpress routes, the Department of Transportation and Parking must also consider safety.

While the Department of Transportation's decision to make changes in P2P Xpress based on student concerns is commendable, it must be careful not to lose sight of students' safety as the main focus of the service.

Recently, our student government conducted a survey, asking student riders questions about the P2P Xpress services. The survey found that students favored the removal of several campus P2P stops. The results were then given to directors of P2P Xpress and of transportation.

On that information, the DTP made several changes. Stops in Craige and the Bell Tower parking lots were eliminated. Other changes included using the P2P Xpress minibuses for other services such as shuttles to Raleigh-Durham airport and election poll sites; and the possibility of a hiring policy favoring student drivers.

Student concerns are valuable resources in exploring what is best for the University. When a service directly affects the student population, it is expected and necessary that their comments and criticisms be heard.

of the shuttle services, are long overdue. Others, however, deserve a re-examination. Even if only a few students need stops at the Bell Tower and Craige parking lots, the stops should return as a part of the P2P Xpress route. Ordinarily, what the majority wants overrules the wants of the

minority. However, one student's safety cannot

be compromised for others' convenience. And though hiring students as drivers for the P2P Xpress service is beneficial for those wanting on-campus jobs, the idea could do more harm than good without close supervision. Students have enough to do with classes, studying and outside activities. While a normal part-time job would not pose a major safety risk for a student short on sleep, driving a shuttle full of rambunctious students until the wee hours of the morning could be a problem. In hiring students, the DTP must ascertain that applicants have both the time and maturity to handle the job.

Many of the changes made in the P2P Xpress services are necessary and will be convenient to students in need of transportation. At the same Some of these changes, such as the addition time, safety needs to remain the top concern.

Tenure tension

With its desire to improve faculty teaching performance, the Faculty Roles and Rewards Subcommittee of the Chancellor's Task Force on Intellectual Climate have finally outlined concrete steps for a frustratingly nebulous discussion about reshaping academic attitudes on campus. But the job is far from over. Efforts to improve teaching must include concrete changes in departmental awards and procedures, including financial and prestige rewards for outstanding teaching and a revision of the tenure process.

The subcommittee recognized faculty disinterest in teaching as discouraging to students' intellectual interests. One-on-one interaction between student and professor seems especially lacking on campus and in professors' conceptions of their role at UNC.

This neglect of teaching responsibilities stems from professors' attitudes about their jobs. Attitudes in general, however, are shaped by the incentives a group has for developing a particular way of thinking. The current attitudes subordinating teaching to research and publication arose from systems of financial and professional rewards that encouraged a focus on such responsibilities as a means to success at the University.

Paying professors extra money for teaching well — for just doing their jobs — sounds ludicrous to many students. To professors, reallocating and holding back funds to pay for these rewards may sound unfair. But, given the present situation, offering financial rewards for good teaching may provide an effective way to reshape attitudes among faculty, and a way to keep good teaching a priority for associate and full professors secure in their positions at the University

Even so, the real source of the problem - and a real solution the subcommittee ignored — lies in the University tenure process. Nothing else shapes the focus of professors' careers more than this all-important evaluation, which will decide whether they get a lifetime job or the boot.

At present, the tenure process relies much more heavily on a professor's publication record and research quality than his or her teaching proficiency. Such a tenure process may result in a university boasting the best researchers in every discipline.

But if students never have access to these professors, what real educational purpose do they serve? And if these professors continue to emphasize research in the hiring of their colleagues, how will teaching ever take its deserved place in the realm of professorial functions?

The subcommittee needs not only to find a better description of the teaching function, but to establish that teaching ability's role in tenure cases. Teaching quality could be easily quantified by examining surveys from professors' students and by hiring professional educators to evaluate and train professors in teaching skills.

Using such evaluations, departments could grant tenure on the basis of all of a professor's responsibilities. Teaching's new role in tenure decisions would, in turn, provide the concrete incentive to make professors change their ways.

Only by attacking at the root of the problem, neglect of teaching in decisions of professional success, will the University ever make great teaching a quality which helps professors steer their careers. Until such real changes occur in the conception of professorial obligations, teaching will continue to take the back seat.

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Article forgets politics are more than party affiliation

TO THE EDITOR:

I read the article "UNC professors lean toward political left" (Oct. 28) with a sinking heart. The way in which the argument is framed assumes that the way one votes indi-cates all of one's views — as if all Democrat-

Student voices necessary for effective universities

here's a strange neurosis in higher education, a conflict between its ideals and reality which is often covered up and denied. The ideal is to educate students to be fully of the ideals. to the fullest of their ability and to advance knowledge at a reasonable cost. But the reality is, a college education has become increasingly narrow and expensive in recent years while research is often bloated and useless. It's like one of those nightmares where legs turn to molasses and the demons seem to be gaining.

What's gone wrong? The answer is that when you turn an organization over to certain people, they shape the organization to meet their real, as well as, idealistic needs. For example, when a pitcher designs a baseball stadium, he makes the outfield walls so distant home runs are scarce. This confusion of personal with idealistic goals is a natural human phenomenon. He means well because he thinks the public wants a good pitching duel more than they want to see home runs. His argument may be intellectually respectable and logically correct, but if it deprives the customers and fans of free choice and the feeling that the game belongs to them,

it is the wrong way to design a stadium.

That's why the key to an institution's ideals is how it is governed. If decisions are made only by those at the top, the institution will tend to favor their goals more than those of people at the bottom. For example, goals of a university are generally: (1) to advance knowledge; (2) to educate undergraduates; (3) to train graduate/professional students; (4) to increase in prestige, size, and influence; (5) and to serve the general public.

But if you put these goals in a pie chart to exemplify priorities, you'd discover wide diferechant priorites, you discover whether ferences of opinion among different constitu-encies. Faculty at top research universities would probably give the biggest slice of the pie to research and graduate/professional train-ing with a small left-over piece of the pie for undergraduates. Undergraduates, on the other hand, would surely assign more than 50 per-cent of the pie chart to serving undergraduate

ROBERT HONIGMAN
GUEST COLUMNIST Unfortunately, university officials would probably not

give an honest answer. They are extremely conscious of public opinion. For example, administrators will often say teaching is considered equally with research in tenure decisions, although this is never true. It's a white lie. So how do you get administrators to tell you exactly what they consider most important? The solution is not to ask them, but simply watch what they do, and deduce their priorities from that. They seem to believe the goal of a university is to increase its size,

goal of a university is to increase its size, influence and prestige.

With this pie chart in mind, observe the university carefully and you'll discover the distribution of resources in the university closely matches the distribution of power. To use an analogy of the African veldt: when an antelope is brought down, the biggest predators routingly tinely get the biggest share of the carcass, no matter how badly the smaller animals may need food and nourishment. Similarly, in the university, the biggest slice routinely goes to build up the size and prestige of the university, the next largest slice goes to increase its research and graduate training, and the smallest slice of pie, the scraps and bones, goes to undergraduate education. It matches the distribution of power exactly.

When a university is run this way, its central

problem becomes: How do you motivate and control undergraduates? The answer is as logicontrol indergraduates? The answer is as logi-cal as it is tragic (all the more so because it's denied). You use lies (public relations), fear, greed and alliances with outside institutions. Gradually, over the last few decades these four horsemen of the apocalypse have come to rule the university. Higher education today is not interested in listening to students and helping them find their way, but in controlling them

and making their behavior predictable.
Of course, universities are a success. They have grown in prestige, size and influence. Sponsored research now dominates all major

campuses. Since the priorities of top administrators and top faculty are being rewarded these people have a strong incentive not to notice the university's moral and social failure. What administrators and faculty don't realize is in the process of achieving their goals they are losing their souls. They have become

they are losing their souls. They have become narrow technocrats, ready to serve anyone who honors their goals and pays their way. They are less able to feel love or empathy for others. They are more dependent on authority and always being right. Their very success depends on continuing to ignore and disparage the needs of ordinary students.

The remedy for this neurotic and dangerous situation is to recognize that faculty, students and officials have adversarial interests and priorities, and each needs a voice in university governance. The priorities and goals of the university today match almost exactly the personal ambitions and goals of faculty and administrators. They take the lion's share of resources. That's why they cannot also claim to be disinterested trustees of their students. "Nothing in the law of fiduciary trusts is better settled than that the trustee shall not be allowed to advantage himself in dealings with the trust estate" (76 Am. Jur. 2d, Section 318). The university is slowly dying, and its top leaders are in denial. A strong students voice university governance will be painful at first, but will gradually allow the university to become healthy and independent again.

So, like a ensign on the Titanic, I run about knocking on doors and interrupt the music and the dancing. I try to tell faculty and administrators that the university is a ship of fools where all their good intentions and high ideals are not enough and never will be. But they look at me oddly and reply, "The lessons of the baseball field aren't applicable here." And the band

Robert Honigman is an attorney from Birmingham, Mich., who has recently completed a book entitled "University Secrets: Your guide to surviving a college



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 space, 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.

voting professors think the same about all issues. This is palpably not the case. Some

professors may choose to vote for the Demo-

safeguard education better than the GOP. But

the same professors may hold dramatically

differing views on foreign policy, the national

debt, abortion, building roads, or what have

Politics go way beyond political parties. Your writer seemed to forget that (last Mon-

day). Perhaps his conversations with Glenn Ricketts persuaded him that true diversity is

simply binary (Republican or Democrat), rather than a whole host of subtly different positions

across the political spectrum from extreme

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR ART DEPARTMENT

crats because they believe that that party

Editorial omits several facts about Student Congress

TO THE EDITOR:

The editorial on Oct. 30 entitled "Downing Town and Gown'" failed to mention several material facts and put words in the mouths of

First of all, it is misleading to state that the finance committee approved Town and Gown's request and that congress members subsequently became suddenly concerned that too much money had been spent this semester. When we on the Finance Committee reported favorably to the full Congress the request Town and Gown made, it was without the knowledge of how much, if any, of the emergency reserves the student body treasurer would allow to be spent. In previous weeks she had opened the reserves up to \$7,000. On the night in question, she opened the reserves up \$2,000. The amount of funding in total being requested by all groups before us that night was significantly more than \$2,000. Some members of Congress made the decision that some of these other groups were more worthy of these funds, of which Town and Gown was asking for almost half.

Second, the editorial states that "the Finance Committee acted irresponsibly in approving a request that excessively taxed their present funding capacities. The committee could have saved the group the embarrassment of appearing before the entire congress only to be denied funding completely." The false. The Finance Committee cannot kill a bill in committee. The worst we could do would be to cut the request to zero dollars and recommend that level of funding to the full Congress, which then makes the decision as to how the group will be funded. Please make an effort to understand the workings of Congress and the actual events that occur before you make judgments or reports on us.

Ed Page, District 14 FINANCE COMMITTEE

Championship Yankees reminiscent of past greats

radical Left to extreme Right.

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you for a short but well written tribute to the New York Yankees ("Damn Yankees," Oct.29)

After being a lifetime Yankee fan, I finally realized the dream after 18 long seasons of mediocre baseball in New York, except for the outrageously arrogant but talented Mets in the mid-'80s, and finally celebrated a baseball championship in New York.

I can still recall the days of Munson (I cried when I learned he was killed in the plane crash in Canton, Ohio), Nettles, Jackson, Guidry, Gossage and the powerhouse Yankees of the Bucky Dent's home run in the one game playoff against the Red Sox, the fans chanting Reggie after his three World Series home runs, the nasty and almost unhittable slider of Ron "Louisiana Lightning" Guidry and even the home run that Goose

gave up to George Brett in the playoffs.

As many memories I have from my wannabe-a ballplayer days in Brooklyn, I can't help but to be proud of this year's edition of the "Bronx Bombers." Every superstition I had I think I followed these last two weeks. My girlfriend sent me a Yankee baseball from New York which I carried with me along with my Yankees cap to a business trip to Florida. I even watched part of the games in a bar and part in the hotel room after we won Game 3 (again following superstition). After the final game I tried to call everyone I knew at 11:30 p.m., but no one wanted to talk to me. It's nice that a college publication in a small southern town can recognize a great season while I'm sure others will tend to overlook it.

Tyrone T. Irby

United States responsible for Indonesian atrocities also

TO THE EDITOR:

Well done reveille on UNC/Indonesia by Graham Brink. I would add that it is an open question whether the West is "directly responsible." There was the visit to Djakarta in 1975 by Ford and Kissinger, two days before the invasion of East Timor by Indonesia's military government. And there was that little matter of 500,000 alleged Communists killed in 1965. The CIA made a list of them — while they were

Time is running out

The deadline for applications to The Daily Tar Heel's editorial board is tomorrow at 5 p.m. Any questions about either applications or the editorial board should be directed to Editorial Page Editor Ryan Norwood at 962-4086.