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The Daily Tar Heel

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BOARD EDITORIALS

State Should Step Up

Gov. Jim Hunt and the N.C. General Assembly seem intent on making North Carolina's public schools the best in the nation - until you're 18.

UNC-system President Molly Broad has suggested that students pick up the slack left by the state legislature, outlining a plan that could leave them paying for capital needs and without adequate financial aid forever.

The plan she released Friday entails three basic steps. First, it jacks up tuition at N.C. State University and UNC-Chapel Hill by \$200 for the much-debated faculty pay raise.

Second, it slaps a \$100 fee on all UNC-system students to pay for construction needs, increasing that fee to \$200 in 2001 and to \$275 in 2002.

Last, it asks the General Assembly to pass a \$36.8 million financial aid package for already existing aid problems - without putting any of the money from the tuition increase into financial aid. Misguided though it was, at least the UNC-CH Board of Trustees' plan would have put 30 percent of its \$1,500 tuition increase toward financial aid.

The basic problem behind Broad's proposal is that North Carolina is strapped for money this year, while UNC schools are falling behind in the national arena. Broad seems to think the only solution is to shift the financial burden to students. But the real solution lies with the state legislature.

Hunt realizes this with the state's public schools. His agenda prides itself on improving North Carolina's schools by raising

teacher salaries and improving Smart Start.

He is asking the General Assembly for \$275 million to increase teacher pay and an additional \$90 million for the preschool program Smart Start, which would put its yearly budget at \$300 million. This is a tight fiscal year for the state legislature, right?

Hunt's proposals have a real chance at succeeding in the legislature because it has decided education is a priority. Higher education in the state of North Carolina should be no different.

Broad and other leaders must step up to the challenge of a needy system coupled with a tight budget and ask state lawmakers to make the UNC system a priority now, without the false hope that the legislature will step up to its responsibility sometime later.

A tuition increase is an easy fix to a complicated set of circumstances. But this particular proposal makes no assurances that there will not be more increases year after year and does not require money from the tuition hike to go toward financial aid.

Broad and state lawmakers must realize many of UNC's problems are easily remedied with the right funds. But setting a precedent of students shouldering the burden of the system's budget inadequacies will make UNC schools less accessible to its residents.

They also must realize that long-term damage of refusing poor students the opportunity to attend UNC is one with far more lasting consequences than an out-of-date building.

freedomofspeech.com

The next time you go online to chat, you might want to be a little more cautious about what you discuss. Assume that anything you "say" can and will be used against you in a court of law.

Or can it? That's the problem. Laws just aren't keeping up with the high speed of technological growth, as the recent suspension of an 11th-grader at Philadelphia Friends' Central School shows.

The boy was suspended because of some comments he made to his pal while chatting on America Online's Instant Messenger. He made some comments that stupid people should be killed or enslaved by the smarter members in society.

His fellow friend in cyberspace printed out the online conversation and took it to school, where school administrators got a hold of it. They decided the comments were distasteful enough to suspend the boy who made them.

Logically, the 11th-grader assumed he was having a private conversation with his pal. If he'd known his online chat would cause his suspension, he probably would never have made such harsh comments in the first place.

It's time for laws to catch up with a world that's becoming more and more dependent on the Internet. AOL's Instant Messenger services, along with any other chat providers

on the Web, need some kind of regulation.

But that legal regulation should not step on individual rights. Lawmakers need to tackle the difficult legal questions of privacy and wiretapping that the suspended boy's ordeal raises.

Is an online conversation the same as a telephone conversation? Both are considered real-time conversations, and recording what someone says over the phone is illegal. Just think back to how Linda Tripp really tripped and stumbled through the legal system when she recorded dozens of phone conversations with Monica Lewinsky.

Shouldn't online chats be held in the same regard? Printing a copy of online conversations, just as the suspended boy's friend did, is just the same as recording one's words over the phone.

It's understandable for schools to be on their toes and a little paranoid after what happened at Columbine High School. But the suspension of this 11th-grader is absurd, for it's based on evidence that couldn't logically be admitted into any court.

Lawmakers need to define some legal boundaries when it comes to chatting online. Then, when someone turns to the Internet to blow off steam, they will know if they should be careful of exactly what they type into cyberspace.

READERS' FORUM

Female Readers Applaud Fennell for Bringing Fraternity Problems to Light; Reader Criticizes Letter Writer for Slamming Communists

TO THE EDITOR:

Josh Fennell deserves thanks from all the women on this and all other campuses for his column on fraternities and gang rape. This is a serious issue and I am impressed that a man had enough guts to stand up for reality. I first and foremost want to congratulate Josh on a job well done.

Second, I want to rebut some of the arguments used to contradict Josh's column. The letter written by Angus McDonald is crazy and lunatic. Angus, I don't believe that Josh meant that every frat boy participates in gang rape or even date rape, but the statistics definitely point to a trend.

So you never heard the word "rape" mentioned. How many guys are going to brag about raping a woman? "Yeah, last night I raped that cute girl at the party. Aren't I cool?" I bet not.

Instead, Angus, how many times have you heard guys bragging about their "conquests"? Don't even try to say none. I spent enough time around fraternities to know that this is a topic more than frequently addressed.

How many times have you asked someone bragging about such an instance and asked if he was sure that the woman was fully consensual, not under the influence of

alcohol or other drugs or if she struggled?

So you believe that Josh relied too hard on "little-known completely incorrect studies" instead of firsthand experience? Let me mention that I have more than a few articles written on this subject by accredited doctorates on this subject. The truth is out there - open your eyes.

If fraternities are such safe havens for women, why then was I told by fraternity members themselves never to go to a fraternity party where I did not know the members, never to take a drink from someone I did not know extremely well at the party, and above all else never to go upstairs without friends?

There are many issues concerning this topic. Two that you should ponder are the code of silence among fraternity members and Rohypnol.

And a last point, you claim that you have never heard of women being used as sexual prey, do you not remember the letter that leaked out during the Take Back the Night Week in fall 1995 stating that the men attending the party had "a 99 percent chance of getting beaver?" Or did that slip your mind?

I would really love to know that every fraternity member is an angel, but I know differently, as do many of the women on the campus and others. Before any of you

frat boys claim that accredited studies are ludicrous, open your eyes to the reality surrounding them. You'll be surprised.

Even though you might not hear of the rapes themselves by the women tortured mentally, emotionally and physically, do not dare say that it does not occur. Perhaps their voices are not loud enough yet, but they are through others like me.

As for all those women who know the truth out there, know that there are people here that do not stand for this and you're not alone.

Caroline Taylor Crawford
Chapel Hill

The length rule was waived.

TO THE EDITOR:

Josh Fennell's Dec. 3 column was just that: a column. He stated his own opinion about how conformist organizations affect the minds of those who join them. He cited several sources on group mentality and how this affects the behavior of people. Those who belong to fraternities act in accordance with those around them.

The conformity of such organizations is seen when viewing how members act toward non-Greeks. I am sure that I am not the only person to be ignored or

looked down upon for not being part of the Greek scene. If you do not conform to their ideals of beauty and popularity, then you are not worthy of their time.

If a fraternity pledge has his own opinions, they are quickly beaten out of him in cult rituals also known as "hazing." During these rituals of degradation, these people learn that they must agree with the group or face the terrible fate of being an outcast. Once they learn how to conform to fraternity ideals, they are unable to think for themselves. When this occurs, it paves the way for situations that Fennell discusses.

David Fleming stated in his Dec. 6 Viewpoints column that "a fraternity is a collection of young men who have 'common goals and aspirations' (Newton D. Baker) and choose to belong to an institution that has proven to develop healthy, productive and often successful individuals in society." Though this is the ideology behind the original conception of fraternities, today this is largely untrue. These organizations, for the most part, promulgate attitudes of superiority just because of social class. Those who belong to fraternities think that they are better than non-Greeks because of their sport-utility vehicles, huge parties and Greek friends.

Of course, anyone with any semblance of a mind knows that this is false.

Apparently fraternities choose to "overlook" the real merits of a person and instead focus on material wealth and superficial characteristics.

Kristin Mendat
Freshman
Undecided

TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to respond to Angus McDonald's Dec. 6 letter in The Daily Tar Heel. How dare he suggest that Josh Fennell has a communist upbringing! No communist I know of would dare write such a caustic article for the sole purpose of pissing people off. Every communist I know of is way too busy fighting capitalism to write such a lengthy article, anyway.

Angus, if you are so angry at blatant stereotypes and name-calling aimed towards fraternities, why the hell in the same letter trash the communist party?

Aren't you doing the same thing you are accusing Fennell of? What did the communists ever do to you? Did they put up a wall in your town? By the way, Fennell left "Big Business" out of his list of criminals.

Richard Conrad Zink
Third-Year Graduate Student
Biostatistics

CHRISTMAS FUTURE?



Students, Not State, Should Pay

Last semester, the proposal to increase UNC tuition met with some predictable hostility from the student body.

Some of the most commonly raised objections to the plan were that it might restrict access to University education for poorer students and that the state constitution did not support the raise.

But the plan was still approved. Is this because the Board of Trustees doesn't care about poor students or doesn't understand the burden of the additional cost? Is it because the board doesn't care about North Carolina's historic and constitutional commitment to providing a university education at a low cost to its residents?

Although some students have suggested that these accusations might be true, I doubt that the BOT, a group of men and women committed to spending their valuable time serving the University, is unaware of these issues or uncommitted to these ideals.

They do, however, have a perspective that most college students do not. It is easy for us, as students, to believe that the state should support our pursuit of education by paying for it.

What the BOT considers, which many of us might neglect to incorporate into our own formulations, is that somebody, somewhere, has to pay the state to pay for our education.

It is also easy for us, as students, to believe that taxing people and companies with plenty of money will generate enough revenue to support our education - and those folks won't feel the pinch a bit.

Now, I'm not arguing about whether or not R.J. Reynolds should have to pay immense taxes - it already does. But the fact is that most of the state's revenue comes from R.J. Reynolds or from wealthy people, but from people like our parents, people working



TARA ROBBINS
SMALL PRINT

in N.C. factories and restaurants to take care of their own families on a yearly average of \$28,000 per household, according to the U.S. Census Bureau in 1999.

Those are the people that should be allowed to keep their money and, if they want, to use it to help pay part of the tuition at a school of their choice for their own kids.

If tuition at a particular school goes up, those who want to invest in their or their children's education at that school can make decisions about whether and how to pay for it.

If the state takes the money and gives it to UNC, though, everyone pays the state to support UNC - even those struggling at the same time to pay tuition at other schools better suited to their needs.

(Even so, I probably wouldn't object as much to supporting tuition through taxes if all of the money raised actually went to tuition, but there are administrative costs to gathering and redistributing that money each year.)

The argument for supporting education through taxes is that an educated society benefits everyone, and I agree that that is true.

So, pay me well when I start to contribute to society using my education. For now, I have the privilege of studying under gifted professors and accessing the vast resources of the library, and I don't have any obligation to

share my knowledge in any specific forum. If the state were to pay for my education, it would have more of a right to tell me what to do with it. I am willing to pay for the privilege of pursuing my own interests, and I don't think anyone else should have to pay for that privilege for me.

Instead, I expect to be paid fairly when I contribute to society by teaching and writing and putting my education to use.

Although this discussion has been framed as if the tuition increase were directed against poor students - because that \$1,500 is more to a poor student than to a wealthy one - I don't think those categories do justice to the nuances of the situation.

I am working in the neighborhood of 32 hours a week to support myself, and taking loans in addition to pay my own (out-of-state) tuition.

I suppose the fact that my only income comes from my part-time job makes me pretty poor. I am not saying this to appeal to your sympathies (though donations, of course, can be left in my mailbox in Donovan Lounge, Greenlaw Hall).

I mean to point out (seriously) that if it costs more to educate me than my current tuition and the University endowment can support, I understand what a tuition increase means in dollars, cents and hours spent working instead of studying.

But I also believe very strongly that my education should be more valuable to me than to some family in eastern North Carolina, and that for that reason, I should be willing to pay for it before asking them to do so for me.

Tara Robbins is a graduate student in the Department of English from Millville, N.J. Reach her at trobbins@unc.edu.



The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticism. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 300 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. Publication is not guaranteed. 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: editdesk@unc.edu.