

Ethics Questioned In CAA Campaigns

Candidates say they are hurt by what they describe as slanderous remarks about their campaigns.

By **KIM MINUGH**
Assistant University Editor

After this year's race for Carolina Athletic Association president was tarnished by negative campaigning, three of four candidates have been forced to print retractions.

CAA President Tee Pruitt signed a public apology Tuesday morning after co-candidates Michael Songer and Adam Walters expressed concern over an e-mail message Pruitt sent to students earlier Tuesday morning.

The retraction was posted at all open poll sites Tuesday afternoon.

Songer and Walters said one e-mail message sent to freshmen and sophomores misrepresented their platform and contained slanderous material.

"There were some pretty gross misrepresentations," said Songer. "(Pruitt) invented a seating plan (for basketball games) and attributed it to us and criticized us for it."

The team said another e-mail message sent to graduate students was factually incorrect. The e-mail message said Pruitt's competition had no ideas on how to represent the concerns of graduate students. Although he signed the apology, Pruitt denied any dirty campaigning, saying he was disturbed by the drama being created.

"We're very upset by this," he said. "In no way was the code of elections laws not followed. There is absolutely no violation in anything I've said."

After Pruitt's campaign staff sent the e-mail message at about 2:30 a.m.

Tuesday morning, Songer and Walters said they contacted Elections Board Chairwoman Catherine Yates. She later decided Pruitt would be required to write a retraction.

Pruitt was not present at the meeting during which Yates made her decision.

Songer and Walters were also required to write a retraction that was posted in the Delta Zeta sorority house.

Yates said Pruitt had expressed concern that the team had criticized last fall's Homecoming celebration while making a campaign pitch at the house.

Pruitt said he found the comment slanderous to his CAA administration. "It obviously hurt me a lot. The damage has already been done."

Yates said she would take no further action in either issue. She said Songer and Walters would have to present a formal complaint to Student Attorney General Drew Haywood to pursue further action.

Haywood said Title VI, Article VII, Section 166 of the Student Code mandated that the Student Honor Court deal with issues of slanderous campaigning.

He said he had not yet received an official complaint from Songer and Walters, but in the event of one, he would want to settle the issue out of court. "My preference is to try to prevent this from escalating because I don't think it had to come to this," he said. "I think there are ways we can effectively handle it without taking official action."

Pending the eventual elections outcome, Songer said he and Walters would not abandon the issue.

"We need more information to see what options are available," Songer said. "But we definitely want to pursue this in some form."

The University Editor can be reached at udesk@unc.edu.

CAA

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hopes of continuing projects his administration began last year and launching new initiatives.

Some of his main achievements this year include increased ticket distribution, the Michael Hooker 5K and organizing a preseason basketball game in Carmichael Auditorium for next year.

Pruitt said his new initiatives included requiring students' UNC ONE Cards to be swiped at bracelet distribution and moving ticket distribution from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m.

He said he also wanted to change the maximum number of tickets that groups could get together from six to 12 and increase Residence Hall Association and graduate student involvement.

Songer and Walters said they wanted to raise recognition of UNC's Olympic sports, allow students to use their ONE Cards at concessions stands in Kenan Stadium and push for increased student seating at men's basketball games.

The third candidate, Corey Bell, ran



DTH/GREG WOLF

Michael Songer (left), a candidate for CAA president, discusses the delay in election results with Jamie Gilbert (center) and Rob Moore.

on a platform supporting better seating for students at the Smith Center, offering later Saturday morning and Friday night ticket distribution, organizing a Greek parade and pushing for reduced

or free admission to bars on Franklin Street for Homecoming.

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TURNOUT

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"As of yet, it will not effect any sort of push back of a runoff," Downs said.

The elections grew more nerve-racking for candidates and supporters when Student Television's "Feedback Live" show, which broadcast live elections results, was plagued by problems.

First, press and supporters of various candidates were unhappy about STV's security efforts. Color-coded nametags provided limited access to the classroom where results were announced on the air.

"When I tried to get in, there seemed to

be some confusion with STV," said Alex Mehfar, campaign manager for student body president candidate Brad Matthews. Mehfar was kept out of the room.

"That's not fair and it's not right, because these people (being denied entrance) are the people who make things happen - not STV," Mehfar said.

Delays caused by the Elections Board's technical difficulties further frustrated students.

Shortly after midnight, STV Director Matt Stradley suggested taking a break from the elections mayhem. Several candidates then abandoned the tension of the crowded lobby for the comfort of Franklin Street bars.

Earlier in the day, candidates shook up the normal activity in the Pit by handing out fliers and shouting to passing students.

"You can't really complain if you disagree with anything unless you voted," said sophomore Will Tadros of Waterbury, Conn. "(The vote) is your voice."

But other students said they would not vote.

Junior Reid Simmons said, "I just haven't been following the issues."

Assistant University Editor Alexandra Moltaire contributed to this story. The University Editor can be reached at udesk@unc.edu.

Campus Calendar

Today

4 p.m. - There will be an **International Festival** planning meeting in Union 210. The meeting is for all students interested in helping with an international celebration of food and entertainment that will take place on March 6.

7 p.m. - Journalism and Mass Communication Professor Chuck Stone will give a lecture titled "A 21st Century America of Richest Diversity and Maximum Parity: Making Sure DeTocqueville, Trent Lott and Ward Connerly Get Lost on the L.A. Freeway," as part of the Carolina Union Activity Board's Last Lecture Series in the Cabaret.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

Thursday

6:30 p.m. - There will be an interest meeting in 208 Dey Hall for the **UNC Mahatma Gandhi Fellowship**. The fellowship will award two \$3,000

stipends to fund research, volunteer or study projects dealing with a South Asian issue. Applications are due Feb. 25 and are available at www.unc.edu/depts/mgf. All returning students are welcome to apply.

8 p.m. - UNC Pauper Players presents **Broadway Melodies 2000**, the annual musical review.

The show starts Thursday and continues through Feb. 20, in the Union Cabaret. Tickets are \$5 for UNC students, faculty, staff; \$10 for all others. The public is welcome.

Sunday

8 p.m. - Attorney Johnnie Cochran will speak on the topic of "Injustice in America" in Memorial Hall.

Pick up free tickets at the Carolina Union Box Office.

For more information, contact the Black Student Movement.

Monday

3:30 p.m. - The Anthropology Club will host a **departmental orientation**

for anthropology majors to be followed by a faculty/student social hour in the Anthropology Lounge in 313 Alumni Building.

All anthropology majors and those interested in the Department of Anthropology are invited to attend. Snacks will be provided.

Items of Interest

■ **The Carolina Outreach Theatre**, UNC's new public service children's theater, will hold auditions for "Rapunzel." Visit the Student Union front desk for more information and to sign up.

■ **UNC Pauper Players announces auditions** for the spring musical, Cabaret. Auditions are Feb. 22 and Feb. 23. Information and audition forms at the Student Union front desk.

■ **Carolina Week by Week** is looking for pictures for next year's edition. Submissions will be judged on aesthetic and entertainment values and if selected will be cropped into squares for print.

Entries should be clearly marked on the back of the photograph with the photographer's name, address and telephone number.

The deadline is April 7. Send entries to: Week by Week Photos, CB #1530 Daniels Building, Chapel Hill, NC 27599.

SBP

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Smiley's campaign staff began the night huddled around a table, scribbling numbers feverishly and bolstering her with hugs. However, by midnight, Smiley was stretched out on the floor, trying desperately to catch a moment of sleep, her head pillowed on a jacket.

Ray also tried to get some rest, returning home to bed before the official announcement from the Elections Board.

In fact, many frustrated candidates were in and out throughout the night, making only short appearances at the headquarters and choosing to take naps, hit local bars or visit with friends instead.

Those candidates who did stay alert and awake throughout the evening attempted to put a bright face on the night's events.

"I'm feeling good about tonight after being in the Pit and at Chase," Martin said. "I took a more personal route."

Candidate Michael Harris said the worst was over despite the frustrating wait that lay before the candidates.

"I'm feeling great, even campaigning and getting very little sleep," Harris said. "Now I can just sit and wait for it all to happen."

Harris began the night full of enthusiasm and energy, greeting his campaign workers with a group hug as he left the STV studio after the first results were announced.

However, by the end of the night, members of his campaign staff were lounging on the chairs, their feet up, trying to collect their thoughts and stay positive.

As the night dragged on, many candidates were enlisted to fill space on STV to keep themselves busy.

Candidates participated in mini-debates on several issues pertinent to their platforms, as well as playing games such as "Who Wants to Be a Student Body President," a takeoff on the popular game show "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire."

One hot topic of conversation among the restless campaign workers and candidates concerned write-in candidate Bersticker, especially his unexpected third-place showing in the unofficial results and his noticeable absence from the elections headquarters.

Bersticker's campaign began with a column in the Feb. 11 Daily Tar Heel when columnist Brian Frederick suggested the junior forward for the varsity men's basketball team as a potential write-in candidate.

Many involved with the election wondered about the effect of Bersticker's campaign and how seriously the candidate himself was taking it. As the early numbers put Bersticker in contention, many candidates and their staff speculated about the role he might play as further numbers are reported.

Final commentary on the night came as candidates shuffled out of Sitterson and headed for home.

Matthews said, "Just everyone go home and go to bed."

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carolina women's Basketball



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