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ROB NELSON  
EDITOR  
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# The Daily Tar Heel

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EDITORIAL SERIES

## Advancing Academics

Chancellor-elect James Moeser wants UNC to be top-notch. But he needs to lead a major academic overhaul first.

Chancellor-elect James Moeser will be taking control of a university that some say has been coasting on its reputation. While UNC remains a top-notch institution, Moeser needs to examine several aspects of the academic experience if he wants to make the University one of the best in the nation.

Rewriting the Books

In the midst of a national wave toward liberalizing college curriculum requirements, UNC has remained painfully silent in its response to calls for change.

While colleges like Brown University have taken the drastic step of eliminating all core requirements, UNC's current requirements were set 20 years ago, with remarkably few changes since that time.

UNC's curriculum requires students to take 13 to 14 General College courses and an additional four Arts and Sciences perspectives.

The Arts and Sciences perspectives must be abolished. Once a student declares a major, there is no need to force more courses on their already increasing work load.

And the amount of emphasis UNC places on general requirements is absurd. There is simply no need for a student to have 18 of his 40 classes dictated by South Building.

But an equally important question is why students are so upset about their heavy major and core requirements.

The problem is course selection. UNC offers a pathetic number of specialized courses, instead forcing students to spend an immense amount of their class time in huge introductory lectures.

If UNC focused on creating innovative, challenging new classes, students wouldn't be paying for a course taught by other students.

Moeser must take advantage of his role as an outsider to help liberalize and reform UNC's curriculum. Money and initiative for curriculum reform should come straight from the top.

But more importantly, Moeser must create an environment that encourages and demands curricular innovation by professors and departments.

Climate Control

Like Moeser, Chancellor Hooker wanted UNC to rank among the very best universities in the nation. To that end, Hooker envisioned a sprawling plan to improve the "intellectual climate" on campus, laid out in the 1997 Report of the Chancellor's Task Force on the Intellectual Climate. Now that

Moeser will take the reins, he needs to take a close look at that report and decide what works and what should be scrapped.

The 1997 report is a mixture of sound ideas and wishful thinking. Some ideas have already been implemented and have proven their worth. The First-Year Seminar is one such idea, and it has proven to be both successful and popular.

The Carolina Computing Initiative, an outgrowth of the Intellectual Climate Report, is still too new to fully evaluate. Nevertheless, it has the potential to become another successful measure, provided that faculty members are able to integrate the new technology into their curricula.

But other suggestions in the report, such as the idea to create more coffeehouses on campus, are either too far-fetched or trivial to occupy the chancellor's time.

Moeser should focus his efforts on the more promising ideas, such as the University Center for Public Service, which coordinates public service activities for students and promotes community-based education, and the Office of Undergraduate Research, which provides undergraduates opportunities to structure their own research projects with faculty members. Both of these institutions could become important components of the University's academic culture.

Better Advice

Another aspect of University academic life in need of some further adjustment is advising. The academic advising system has been reformed, rerouted and reworked over the past few years, yet it remains problematic.

Due to modifications made in the advising process last fall, students were assigned to academic teams, rather than a single adviser.

While students have gained increased access to advisers, the system is still plagued by the same old ailments - unavailability and incompetence.

There are slightly more than 40 General College advisers or deans in the Steele Building for all freshmen and sophomores. A 40-to-10,000 adviser-to-student ratio is not conducive to developing a lasting bond - or even name recognition - with an adviser.

The system as a whole remains suspect, and improvements need to be made. The adviser-to-student ratio needs to be leveled out, and advisers, though admittedly at a disadvantage due to the inadequacies of the system itself, need to step it up and increase the accuracy of their advising.

Staying on Top

For all its inadequacies, UNC remains one of the finest public institutions in the country. But to maintain its status as a premier university, Moeser should hit the books and find out what works and what doesn't.

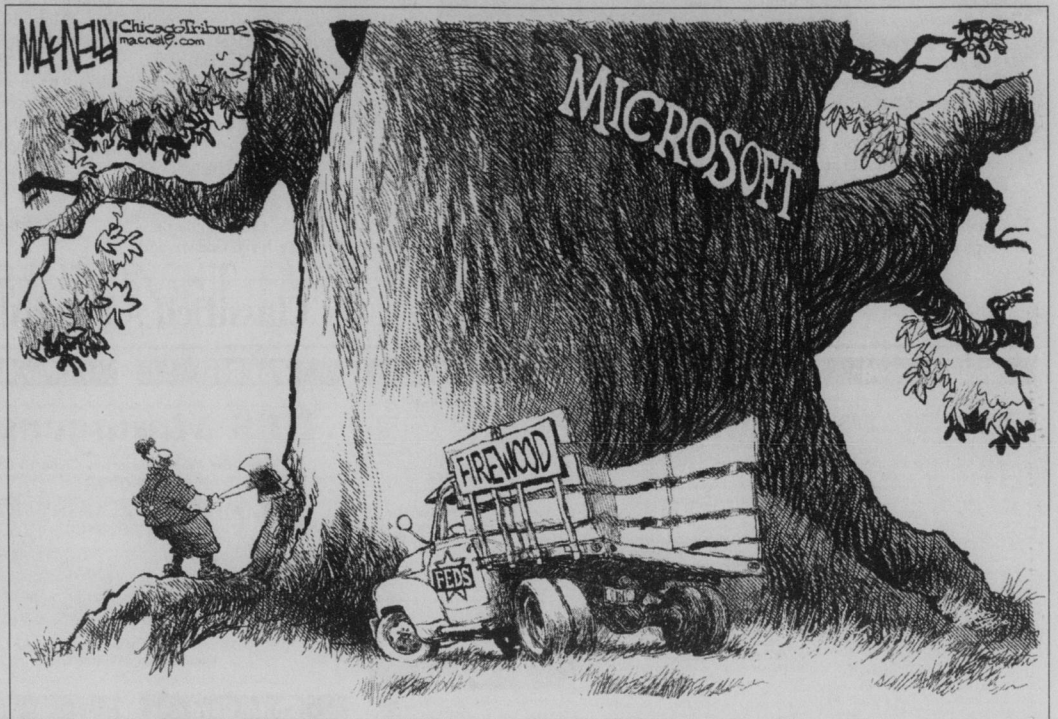
Don't Just Sit There - Apply!

If you'd like to be a columnist, editorial board member or cartoonist for fall 2000, come by the DTH front office in Suite 104 of the Student Union and pick up an application. Completed applications are due by 5 p.m. Thursday, and those selected will be notified by 5 p.m. Tuesday, May 9. Questions? Call Editorial Page Editor-select Kelli Boutin at 962-0245.

**Chancellor's Checklist**

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Part two of an editorial series examining the issues Chancellor-elect Moeser should make his top priorities



## The Battle for Freedom Is Timeless

Before I begin the last installment of the "Libertarian Letters," I want to say a couple of things.

First, I want to apologize for being able to address during the course of the semester only a handful of issues that deserve discussion. But hey, there's only so much you can do in 14 weeks or so.

Second, I am taking the liberty (bad pun) of giving this final column a more personalized approach (the use of the personal "I," for example), despite my editor's warnings in the past.

OK, enough preface.

In January, I introduced this column by looking at past erosion of American liberty. In this concluding installment, I will look at what the future holds for our political system.

Politically, people are dividing into two distinct camps, only one of which can eventually triumph in the battle of the new millennium.

These are the advocates of two diametrically opposed concepts not found on the traditional left-right political spectrum: freedom and force. (From here on in I will invoke Star Wars analogies in parentheses, partially for ease of comprehension and partially because I think it's fun.)

Proponents of freedom (Jedi Knights) believe that individuals are essentially free agents capable of acting according to a moral code. They believe each individual's free will should dictate what he or she does with their person and property. They eschew using force to affect the behavior of person who has not coerced anyone else.

In contrast, proponents of force (the Dark Side) believe that individuals are essentially victims of circumstance. They maintain that certain people are hopelessly constrained by factors beyond their control and are incapable of shaping their own lives. Consequently, they justify empowering a centralized authority to coerce an artificial balance.

Now, it is important to note that most people who succumb to the Dark Side are basically good people (Anakin Skywalker). They simply have been seduced into believing that coercion, known in political terms as "law," is



JONATHAN TRAGER  
THE LIBERTARIAN LETTERS

an effective way to solve problems. Seduced by whom? By the agents of the State, more aptly known as the federal government (the Emperor).

Seduction begins early, as American children are inundated with sources regaling the benevolence of government and collectivization.

Members of the mainstream media and public educators are often big time cohorts of the Dark Side.

This childhood brainwashing often yields adults who fervently believe bigger government is better government, yet are unable and unwilling to defend their position. Because questioning authority makes them uneasy, they either immediately disengage their attention when someone else does, or they unload hostile, personal attacks on the questioner.

In short, they are more like programmed robots than rational human beings. They have succumbed to the Dark Side.

Nevertheless, they are not helpless. Consider that while Anakin Skywalker accepted the Dark Side to become Darth Vader, his son Luke successfully resisted the temptation.

Making the transition from Dark Side to Jedi Knight requires you to focus your ability to reason (the Force, not to be confused with coercion), which can be strenuous. Notably, Jedi Knights recognize the difference between a "right" and a "want."

Simply put, a right does not impose any obligation on other people to provide something for you; it only demands that other people respect that right. Therefore, you can only

legitimately claim a right to immaterial things. The classical rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" clearly illustrate this fact.

Recognizing someone else's right to live, for example, doesn't mean you must actually give them anything. It simply means you can't kill them or forcibly deprive them of getting things such as air, water, etc.

But ideas such as a "right" to medical care, housing and a job really aren't rights at all. Rather, they are cleverly disguised wants, because they make demands on other people to provide goods and services for others while threatening violence for noncompliance.

For example, when someone argues for a law respecting his "right to medical care," he is actually saying, "I demand that people be given a choice: either they pay for my doctor visits, medications, etc., or they go to jail."

Put this way, such a statement clearly seems immoral - and it is. Automatically tagging the produce of one person's labor for another person's use is the essence of slavery, which is obviously antithetical to a free society.

Jedis, on the other hand, realize individuals have the right to use whatever talents and abilities are at their disposal to try and obtain medical care, a house, a rocket ship or whatever else they want. They don't, however, have any right to force other people to provide things for them by threatening to lock them in jail.

As the great Jedi Master George Washington once said: "Government is not reason; it is not eloquence. It is force. Like fire it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master."

Now that you understand who the fighters are, it's time to ask yourself the big question: Which side are you on?

G-d bless America, and let the battle rage on.

Jonathan Trager is a senior journalism and mass communication major from Long Island, N.Y. who feels he has a right to a job after he graduates. Please send offers to trager@email.unc.edu.

## The Global Economy Requires Popular Global Movement

"Solidarity must become globalized."  
- Pope John Paul, May 1, 2000

This is my last column. Let's review my radical agenda. I favor turning swords into plowshares, treating people as we would like to be treated and rejecting materialism. Pretty radical, huh?

Psychologist Erik Erikson posed this dilemma: A druggist has the cure for a woman's cancer, but she can't afford it. Should her husband steal it?

Most people say yes, human needs ultimately trump property rights. But the World Bank and International Monetary Fund take the opposite stance. Property rights are supreme. Even ownership attained by swindle or force during colonial rule is legitimate.

Protests against the bank and IMF have created what Ralph Nader calls the "blue green coalition" of unions and environmentalists. But the media paint a different picture of this seminal moment in American democracy.

After Seattle, mostly peaceful protests were spun as riots. Since the D.C. actions, protesters have again



DANIEL BREZENOFF  
POINT OF VIEW

been caricatured. We are as efficiently organized as a corporation, probably violent, a motley crew of hippie utopians, Gen-X yuppies nostalgic for the '60s, greedy Teamster protectionists, the resentful left, a chip on our collective shoulder left over from the Cold War, anarchists looking for a fight.

As protests "raged" in our capital (I am told they raged, though they appeared quite mild to me as I cavorted on the Ellipse), journalists (so-called) raced to coax soundbites from the freakiest faces in the crowd. A reporter from National Public Radio (the liberal voice of the people) recorded one activist comparing the

Mobilization for Global Justice to Luke Skywalker. That, explained the young man, means "the IMF and World Bank are the Death Star." If this is the voice of my generation, I'll take Jon Trager.

Meanwhile, the IMF and World Bank are misunderstood social workers, only trying to help the poor and hungry. Where barefooted peasants once crossed rivers on shaky beams of wood, the bank builds a modern bridge for automobiles. The IMF backs factories to employ whole families, raising their standards of living a buck a week. Through structural adjustment, the governments of poor nations are end wasteful spending programs, such as those that provided people water (Bolivia) and bus rides (Moldova).

Employees of the IMF and World Bank understand economics better than any cashew farmer or basket-weaver. If the people of Africa and Latin America are so smart, why don't more of them have televisions and rollerblades? They need guidance from trained economists to achieve the suburban lifestyle of middle-class America. That is the goal of globalization, right?

Ministers at the IMF and World Bank admit their policies often neglect the poor and the environment, but this, they assure us, is changing. So why all the protests? Because pressure from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), unions, environmentalists and the like has catalyzed that change.

It is instructive to compare the developing world, and the current growth of capitalism, to the United States of a century ago, and to note the differences between the two societies.

The Gilded Age United States enjoyed a democratic tradition, flawed, but protected by the Bill of Rights. But much of the developing world lacks political freedom, and the IMF and World Bank (and the U.S. government) often exacerbate the situation by supporting anti-democratic forces, such as Suharto in Indonesia, Pinochet in Chile and Christiani in El Salvador.

Capitalism does not guarantee democracy. Corporations are not kind to democratic processes in the United States; how tolerant of dissent will they be in Nigeria, Vietnam, Guatemala? Without help from governments, con-

sumers and activists, human rights don't stand a chance.

The second important difference between Gilded Age America and today's majority world is that the United States had access to the resources and cheap labor of weaker nations and channeled them into the domestic economy through imperialism. This enabled the United States to spread the benefits of capitalism to a broad segment of its population.

Today, the majority world enjoys no such luxury. In fact, through interest on loans and the exportation of cheap goods, services and agricultural products, the West is still draining resources and capital out of its former colonies.

Protesters who went to Seattle and D.C. want the bank and IMF to address these issues. They are also concerned about ecological protection. Perpetual growth is impossible on a planet of finite resources. Progressives also fear what seems to be the impending doom of all cultures not willing to eat at McDonalds and watch "Frasier." Irreplaceable knowledge and beauty will be forever lost if that occurs.

Finally, we know that the global economy is not the simplistic equation trade mongers make it out to be. We remember the "Green Revolution," which promised to help farmers produce more food, but drove down prices, forcing thousands of families off the land and into the slums. This is the face of globalization, not a smiling Burmese peasant washing her clothes with Tide, listening to a Walkman.

Media pundits and neoliberal economists smugly dismiss the protesters' ideology as "antiglobalization." This mischaracterization should be abandoned. We are not protectionists or jingoists. We are simply opposed to the unilateral imposition of corporate oligarchy, which undermines traditional economies, cultural autonomy and, often, democratic government. We would like to see developing nations welcomed into the 21st, rather than the 19th, century. Is that so much to ask?

Daniel Brezenoff graduates from the School of Social Work in two weeks. Yippee! His home number is listed in the phonebook. Call him if you want.