BOARD EDITORIALS

Necessary Voice

The BOT's decision to support a student BOG vote is a step forward. The General Assembly should follow suit to empower students.

The concept of having a nonvoting seat on a governing body isn't exactly the most empowering of all ideas to begin with. But when such a seat is supposed to represent all of the students in the UNC system, this lame duck position is all the more troubling.

That's why the UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Trustees should be applauded for its resolution asking the N.C. General Assembly to adopt legislation allowing the president of the UNC Association of Student Governments a vote on the UNC-system Board of Governors.

It's time the students finally got a voice.

For student governments to have any tangible effect on the lives of students – the very people they are supposed to be representing – they must have a legitimate leg to stand on. A vote on the BOG is a step in that direction.

If the existing ASG seat on the BOG is given a vote, it will only be one of 33. As BOT member Richard Williams half-jokingly told The Daily Tar Heel, "It's just one vote, it won't destroy the Board of Governors."

In all seriousness, Williams is right. While one student vote would be a vast improvement for the student voice in the UNC system, it is unlikely to cause major upheaval or some sort of BOG revolution. It will simply give an organization that most students don't even know exists the ability to legitimately serve its constituents.

Opponents to an ASG vote claim that a student representative wouldn't know enough to vote on major UNC-system issues or that a student would have a too narrow and student-specific perspective.

But questioning students' knowledge and experience is underestimating them. Students who are involved in student government generally are passionate about what they're doing, and those who rise to the ASG presidency must be particularly hardworking. This is not even mentioning the fact that BOG members have said that a student vote will have little impact in daily operations because a critical issue rarely comes up before the full board.

As for the vote having a pro-student bias, so what? Students need someone looking out for their interests, as it sometimes seems as though BOG members are far removed from students' lives.

If the General Assembly once again votes against a student vote on the BOG, it will be a slap in the face to all the students in the UNC system.

One vote would mean only a small voice on the BOG, but it's a small voice students need and deserve.

Reforming Standards

Recommended state writing test changes would make the tests a better measure of students' abilities and needed improvements.

A proposal given to the N.C. Board of Education last week by a panel of educators concerning revamping state writing tests deserves implementation.

North Carolina students in fourth, seventh and 10th grades take a standardized writing tests that panel members say are out of line with the way schools teach writing.

Students now receive just one grade that supposedly reflects their writing abilities regarding a number of different elements, such as word choice.

The study group recommended students receive scores for each of the elements.

This would give students much-needed feedback in the areas in which they need the most improvement.

Giving students one blanket score doesn't give them any information about their writing abilities.

The panel also said students should be able to choose from more than one topic on which to write.

This reform would allow students to pick a topic they have some interest in and so would give them more of a chance to demonstrate their skills.

In addition, the study showed students should have more time to edit and revise their writing.

And they should.

In the real world people don't hand in writing they haven't had at least a small amount of time to revise.

But the group recommended students have perhaps as long as several days to revise their writing. The test should be given only during one school day – in the morning and then again in the afternoon, for example – because otherwise overzealous parents and teachers might be inclined to get involved in the editing process.

Out-of-state teachers currently grade the tests, and the panel told the board in-state teachers should be the ones grading them.

North Carolina educators have a better idea of how North Carolina schools work and therefore how well students are doing within the state's school system.
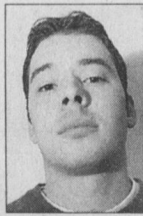
Standardized testing will never be perfect but for lack of a better system for testing and comparing student achievement, the educator's panel has come up with some good recommendations to personalize it a little more.

DOHERTY'S SECRET RECIPE

Naysayers Should Give CCI Chance

I am writing this piece in support of the Carolina Computing Initiative and with concern that recent articles in The Daily Tar Heel might give readers only a negative impression of the initiative's impact.

I write reluctantly, in that CCI resources have provided the College of Arts & Sciences with the funding for many of my department's positions (including my own). Consequently, my comments might easily be misconstrued as self-serving. Nevertheless, I am drawing on 10 years of experience managing information technology resources in higher education prior to coming to UNC when I state that CCI already has provided immediate, outstanding benefits to the faculty, staff and teaching graduate students in the Arts & Sciences. It provides current and ever-increasing benefits to students.

The CCI, among other things:

1.) provides high-quality computers for Arts and Sciences faculty, staff and teaching graduate instructors. No full-time faculty or staff member or teaching graduate instructor should have a computer *right now* that is more than 3 years old. Life cycling standard equipment on a three- to four-year cycle saves money in the long run by alleviating the support headache caused by a hodgepodge of 5- to 7-year-old computers from various vendors.

Institutionalizing the provision of computer technology has freed up departmental time and resources to focus on more important issues than year-to-year technology provision.

2.) provides funding in the Arts & Sciences to hire people to support this massive influx of capable technology and to support integrating information technology into the classroom. Seven CCI positions have been filled in the past year, and eight more will be hired in the next six to nine months to help support the increased use of technology.

■
RICK PETERSON
POINT OF VIEW

3.) provides a cost-effective support environment that community members can count on when their computer equipment breaks. While perhaps unpopular with some Mac users, specifying a single vendor platform stretches thin support dollars and provides higher quality of service as a whole.

4.) provides instructors with a "known" student technology capability, allowing them to restructure courses without worrying that some students will not have access to the technology and information resources needed to complete certain assignments.

5.) provides need-based support for student purchase of laptops, eliminating questions of access for those unable to afford a computer.

I hope that any faculty, staff and students who still feel that the CCI has not lived up to its expectations will be patient, as the program is still unfolding. In order to make an institutional change of this size there are formidable challenges to address. For example, faculty and graduate instructors need access to and familiarity with the technology before they are in a position to decide whether integrating it into their particular subject area makes sense. This is a cumulative process that takes place over time through workshops, individual experimentation and reflection.

Also, although classrooms on campus continue to be renovated, many are presently ill-suited to accommodate the technology (wired or wireless) needed to support a complete class of "laptop-enhanced" students. With the recent passing of the higher education bonds, renovation efforts to enhance classroom technology will proceed more dramatically.

While the CCI is still in its early stages of implementation I welcome those with positive and negative experiences to share them in the spirit of moving forward. Shared positive experiences allow us to build on success, and shared negative experiences allow us to solve problems and focus on improving in the future. Already I'm aware that faculty in the English, psychology and mathematics departments have been asking first-year students (since it cannot be assumed yet that all sophomores, juniors and seniors have access to appropriate computer technology) to bring laptops for use in class, and have been having success in their efforts.

Is a goal of the CCI to have students using their laptop every day in every course? Of course not. Each faculty member or graduate instructor will need to decide for themselves the benefit (or detriment) of using these new technologies in support of learning.

Can the benefit of having life-cycled computer technology as an institutional priority be understated in an institution such as Carolina? Can the value of every incoming Carolina undergraduate from now on having 24-hour access to a portable computer be underestimated? I do not believe so in either case. This program has touched everyone in Arts & Sciences just in time, meeting a desperate need for updated computer equipment and support. As time goes on, I believe the CCI will be seen for what it is – a program ahead of its time for a large public university, and one that provides a solid base from which the University community can experiment with innovative technologies that could enhance teaching, learning and research.

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Elect Caleb Ritter SBP

■ Provide the student body with services that they can use in their day- to-day lives so that they see that student government can be useful to them.

■ Create an Online Student Book Exchange for students to trade, buy and sell their books to each other online.

■ A UNC class profile, which will provide students with detailed information on classes, such as difficulty, quality of the teacher and class and a composite of old

Caleb Ritter

tests and quizzes for study purposes.

■ Create an Online Student Bulletin Board which will be a place for students to find important dates and deadlines as well as information about public events going on in the Greek community such as late nights, bands and fund raisers.

■ A Greek affairs committee to relay the concerns of fraternities and sororities to student government and to update the student body on the activates and accomplishments of the Greek community

■ A press relations position to keep The Daily Tar Heel and other campus media forums updated on what student government is working on.

Choose Larry T. Harper

■ Honor Court and attorney general staff reform
  ■ A Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Resource Center
  ■ UNC course review
■ Textbook Exchange Database
■ Fare-free busing
■ Elimination of Section II.D.2.d. of the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance (possession of marijuana class drugs)
■ More courtesy phones
■ Increased P2P services
■ Elimination of that damn swim test requirement
■ No mass campaign e-mails or voice mail messages

Larry T. Harper Jr.

Make Justin Young Your Choice

Are you sick and tired of a student government for the few by the few?

We are proud to present Justin Young, a student body president candidate dedicated to breaking down old barriers, defying stereotypes and fighting for all students.

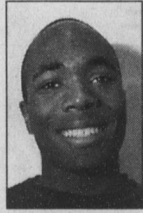Check out his exciting new features! Greater detail on the web at www.unc.edu/~jcyoung!

■ Reject the salary of student body president and use the money as a down payment on the Student Empowerment Endowment, a new system to allow any student with a solution to a campus problem easy access to the resources of student government.

■ Take the Carolina Computing Initiative to the next level by providing fast, reliable off-campus Internet access and tech support for all students.

■ Establish the Carolina Lobby Corps, a diverse group of students trained to effectively advocate for us in the General Assembly.

■ Reform campus construction policies, ensuring that student safety and convenience, as well as environmental protection, become top priorities, especially on South Campus.

I am committed to being honest about the problems we face at Carolina and taking bold

Justin Young

steps to overcome them.

■ Fight for a tuition guarantee, preventing politicians and administrators from raising our tuition faster than the rate of inflation.

■ Work with local cab companies and student organizations to establish a safe ride designated driver program.

■ Expand SAFE Escort to allow pick-ups at locations other than Davis Library.

■ Review Davis Library safety procedures in light of recent incidents and extended hours.

■ Create a task force with the Department of Public Safety, Chapel Hill and Carrboro police departments and students to protect us from crime, whether on or off campus.

I want to help improve the quality of life at Carolina by encouraging a campus that is racially, intellectually and creatively diverse.

■ Create a Cabinet-level minority affairs director in the executive branch.

■ Publicize mission of the Black Cultural Center through trailers before Union films, C-TOPS and other campus venues.

■ Host a statewide race relations conference sponsored by student groups, University departments and student government to encourage meaningful dialogue on important issues surrounding race at UNC.

■ Support the creation of a lesbian gay bisexual transgender resource center.

■ Work with the Office of Minority Affairs and other University departments to improve minority recruitment and retention programs and to re-evaluate and expand the

University's definition of minority.

■ Aggressively recruit minority faculty as many positions become available in the next several years.

■ Build stronger networks and representation for international students.

The purpose of student government should be to help empower us all to achieve our goals and solve our problems. I want to extend those resources and opportunities to all students.

■ Establish the Student Empowerment Endowment using my student body president salary and donations from alumni, businesses and other sources.

■ Assure a student organization resource center in the new Student Union to allow groups without office space access to computers, copiers and phones.

■ Form a president's council with leaders of student organizations to allow greater cooperation and input.
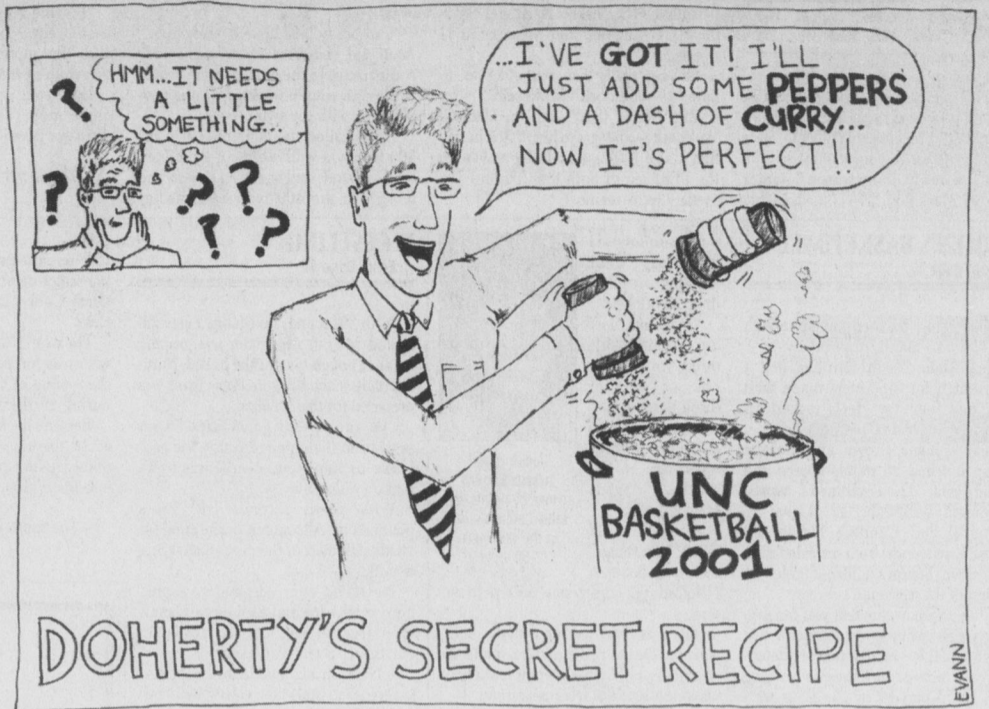
■ Provide regular progress reports on WXYC, Student Television, The Daily Tar Heel and other campus media.

■ Create a new Web site listing student-friendly housing to make landlords accountable to students' needs.

■ Work with Student Legal Services to prevent landlord rip-offs and fight for the rights of off-campus students.

■ Fight for fare-free busing for students on Chapel Hill and Carrboro buses.

■ Provide University space for summer storage of lofts and furniture.