

Opinion



Board Editorials

Ranking Report

Moeser needs to clarify his position on rankings — not just to the nation but also to the University community

Last week an editorial ran in The New York Times claiming that the U.S. News and World Report's annual rankings of colleges and universities was flawed.

The report has spurred universities to make specific changes, not necessarily in the best interest of students, to place higher in the rankings.

The editorial named two schools — UNC-Chapel Hill and Ohio State — that "designed institution-wide strategies to boost their rankings."

Chancellor James Moeser defended the University in a letter to the Times stating, "One of the strongest messages I have shared since becoming chancellor last year is the importance of not becoming preoccupied with comparisons to other universities and specifically journalistic rankings."

Moeser pledged to make UNC the top public university in the country in his University Day address last year. But while he maintains that he doesn't care about

comparing UNC to other universities, the projects and goals he has pursued seek to correct programs that have brought the University's ranking down.

For example, 7 percent of the ranking hinges on average faculty salary. This was a weak point for UNC in last year's rankings compared to the University of Virginia and the University of California at Berkeley, two public institutions edging us out in the survey. Almost predictably, the bulk of last year's tuition increase went to padding the paychecks of the University faculty.

An editorial in the Washington Monthly criticizing the methods used by the U.S. News and World Report to rank universities stated that average faculty salary had a negative correlation with student satisfaction and learning. "It's largely a proxy for the emphasis the institution puts on research," the editorial stated. And, unfortunately, research and teaching appear to be fairly exclusive, according to Alexander

Astin, director of UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute.

Representatives of Ohio State University, the other institution singled out by the New York Times editorial, did not deny that the report had an influence over the ways they were working to improve their school. In Ohio State's 2010 plan for improvement, four of the 40 criteria specifically related to rankings.

Moeser needs to show similar candor as representatives from Ohio State. He wrote to the New York Times to defend the University, but no such letter was sent to The Daily Tar Heel, where students would be guaranteed to read it.

He also needs to remember that his main audience is not the nation — but the University community. Moeser needs to stop skirting the issue — he needs to specify what he believes makes the University "number one" and whether rankings play a part.

How Suburban White America Killed Hip Hop

Every black kid knows it, and every white kid can't come to grips with it. Me and my evil army of privileged suburban white kids ended hip hop as it should be and facilitated the ongoing dearth of poignant lyricism and depth that characterized hip hop as "real."

I don't feel I should be held personally responsible for its demise. I've been trying to embrace what I thought were the roots of hip hop and hoped to "hear" the music and not just listen. But I know I can only go so far.

Right off, I'd like to apologize. I am one of the millions of white, suburban kids who sucked the life out of yet another cultural phenomenon.

These are the same people who gave you the blues, jazz and rock 'n' roll.

I recall childhood memories... My over-sized brick house sat about 15 minutes outside of a decently sized northern city, and my navy Volvo station wagon (turbo) purred as I carted my little sister around town hitting the vast array of malls and mega-theaters.

I attended one of those private schools surrounding the beltway and owned more than 5 pairs of khaki pants... what a life. I also listened to my fair share of hip hop. In doing so, I regretfully can say that its best days are behind us.

Rap caught on because it offers a chance for artists to freely express themselves (see jazz and blues).

One didn't need lessons, just hard work to develop a unique style — A Tribe Called Quest's Q-Tip said it best in "Excursions." "My pops used to say (hip-hop) reminded him of bebop."

That's all well and good — hip hop stayed in the black community.

But as soon as Luther Campbell (2 Live Crew), Ice T and N.W.A. made it into our mini-vans — that was it.

Ironically enough, it was three white, suburban, Jewish kids who did the most in bringing hip hop into our room and mine.

The Beastie Boys — originally scorned by hip-hop enthusiasts as "cultural pirates" appeared to be no more than a freak show at first.

But, by the release of their third album, *Check Your Head*, every white kid I knew claimed he was the next Mike D, Ad-Rock and/or MCA.

When record companies realized they could sell "black stuff" to all these white kids, it was the day the music died. I'm sure you know where the story goes from here. MC Hammer's 1990 album *Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em* sold 10 million copies to make it the most popular rap album of all time.

Vanilla Ice went seven-times platinum the same year with *To the Extreme*.

Most of you will fondly remember those as middle school years you'd like to forget.

I don't want to give off the impression that I was too good to be swept up in all this mess.

I saw Vanilla Ice and Young MC back in the day and I loved every second of it.

Now where has rap been since then? After these goof-balls, I'd argue for the most part — nowhere. Sure, say what you will about Outkast, Puff Daddy (P. Diddy), Jay Z, 2 Pac, Biggie and even Wu-Tang, but most of it's corporate rap — created for us, so we'll buy it.

Gone are the days of the mildly offensive, yet smooth "stylings" of De La Soul, Digable Planets and the Jungle Brothers — not to mention the real classics like Slick Rick, Public Enemy, Run DMC, Grandmaster Flash and Curtis Blow.

Point being, we're sorry — I'm sorry. I'd much rather roll a blunt (something else us rich suburban white kids got the hang of pretty quickly as well) and pop in any of those aforementioned records than sit around and chill to anything on 102 Jams these days.

I want to use this opportunity to further extend my thanks to the black community for continually coming up with new things for us, brainless, culturally devoid kids to adopt as our own. Our suburban centers leave no opportunity for people to talk about what's new and create our own culture.

Whether it's music, clothes, cars or euphemisms, I salute the black community, and frankly, I don't know where I'd be without you.

Josh Baylin is looking for the next big thing in hip hop and is willing to take his shirt off, twist it round his hand and spin it like a helicopter. Raise up and e-mail him at jbaylin@email.unc.edu.



JOSH BAYLIN
HELL UP
IN HARLEM

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READERS' FORUM

God Wants Disciples Who Will Give Hearts, Souls, Minds to Him

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing in response to the Aug. 30 column entitled "Playing Follow the Leader in Religious Terms." I am not saying that I know all the "mysteries of the universe" as the article described it, but I do know something. Society has made all of us accept others no matter what their beliefs are. The article in The Daily Tar Heel suggested that if you associate yourself with Christianity then you are admitting that people with different beliefs than yours are wrong.

The truth is that neither I nor anyone else in the world is saying that homosexuality, drunkards, idolaters or people with different beliefs than yours are wrong. The truth is that neither I nor anyone else in the world is saying that says that these are wrong, not me. Yes, I follow these teachings and believe with my whole heart that these beliefs are wrong. But I did not come up with the teachings, God did.

The column also states that if there is a Christian God then he will let "people of all faiths and lifestyles into heaven." If this were true, then why does the Bible, God's

holy word, state that you should not worship other gods but him, and why does he state that certain "lifestyles" can indeed keep you out of heaven? God doesn't call on the casual believer to follow him. He wants a disciple who will give their heart, soul and mind to him.

Douglas Williams
Freshman, Undecided

State Should Encourage Out-of-State Students, Not Drive Them Away

TO THE EDITOR:

It seems as though the legislators have missed something. They have desperately decided who will pay tuition increases instead of how they could come up with money without burdening anyone. A reminder: Out-of-state students currently pay almost five times more than do N.C. students. Why has the legislature decided to push away this demographic instead of tapping into them as a resource?

Out-of-state students do not just add to the diversity of the UNC system but raise academic standards because it is harder for them to be accepted. If legislators want to hem out high qualifications and variety on

this and other campuses, then by all means hike up out-of-state tuition and scare away prospective students. However, it might be smarter to realize the wealth of intelligence, diversity and financial support knocking at

the UNC system's door. If the system would raise the number of out-of-state students accepted to the university by even a little it could offset the budget woes.

So let out-of-staters shoulder the load,

not by charging them more, but by allowing more of them to help.

Becky Acker
Sophomore, Psychology

The Daily Tar Heel

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