

Let Moeser Make Qatar Decision

I have heard several arguments in the past few weeks stating why opening a satellite campus of the Kenan-Flagler Business School in the Middle Eastern nation of Qatar would be bad for UNC.

To do so would be selling out. It would bolster an autocratic regime that ignores basic human rights. Qatari students would be able to earn UNC degrees without coming within thousands of miles of Chapel Hill. And students would have too small a voice in the decision to open this satellite campus.

All these arguments scare me. Not because they're right, but because I fear they might sway policymakers. If you agreed with anything in the previous paragraph, please read on.

First of all, it is entirely appropriate that students not have a casting vote in this decision. Here at UNC we have a wonderful tradition of student self-governance, and from allocation of funds to Honor Code violations, students have more of a say in their own future than at most other universities, public or private. But unfortunately, some students here seem to think that means we deserve a say in decisions that don't even concern us.

The opportunity to open a Qatar campus is not about students in Chapel Hill. It is about students in Qatar. And the proper people to make the decision are Chancellor James Moeser, the Board of Trustees and Dean Robert Sullivan of the business school. They are the administrators of this University, and it is their role, not ours, to administrate it.

Nor is Moeser deaf to the voices of students. He attended a forum hosted by student government and the Campus Y last Wednesday to hear students' views of students, and an advisory seminar is now being formed. While Moeser should not necessarily let this committee prevent the Qatar proposal, students should support his decision, so it is good that he is listening to student opinions.

Then there is the issue of Qatar's government. According to recent reports, Qatar is moving toward a freer and more democratic society. Already it is considered the most progressive nation in the region; education is not only free but compulsory for all citizens, including women.

But the government is not a democracy. Many freedoms we might take for granted do not exist there - Islam is the state religion, and religious freedom is by no means guaranteed, the ruling emir holds absolute power, freedom of assembly is limited, the legal system is biased and inefficient.

But just because Qatari society differs from ours is no reason to shun the country. In fact, it is all the more reason to go. A point that was made repeatedly at Wednesday's forum was that the Qatar campus would be a unique opportunity for cultural exchange. Just because Qatar is different does not mean it is bad. Most Americans know little about conditions in the Arabic world, and even if we do believe democratic governments are superior, we'll never spread those ideals by refusing to deal with Qatar at all.

Only by having a relationship with the nation can the United States foster Qatar's tentative steps toward democracy. For UNC to be a part of that relationship would be a unique honor.

As for "selling out," UNC would be doing anything but that by accepting the Qatar Foundation's invitation. The reason it is contacting U.S. universities, Moeser said Wednesday, is that its own schools have become mired in a social system that gives personal and family connections more weight than merit. The Qataris insist as strongly as we do that no UNC degree be given unless it is earned and that students there be held to the same standards as those in Chapel Hill. Nor would students here or the University itself lose anything. The foundation has committed to paying all costs, including the costs of bringing distinguished visiting faculty to Chapel Hill to replace professors who go to Qatar.

UNC would have nothing to lose in the deal, and everything to gain: a broadened perspective for faculty, opportunities for study and research abroad for students, a chance to engage and interact with the world on an international scale.

The opportunity to spend a semester in Qatar might even help attract top-level faculty to UNC, an important consideration in the coming years.

"Our goal [is] to infuse internationalness on this campus," Moeser said at the forum. "We're depriving you of your education if we don't show you there's more to the world than North Carolina."

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Union Workers Hope to Close Postal Facility

By GÜNEY ACIPAYAMLI
Staff Writer

RALEIGH - Some Raleigh postal workers plan to take the U.S. Postal Service to court Monday to shut down a postal facility where anthrax was found Thursday.

The Local 1078 of the American Postal Workers Union is requesting a temporary restraining order to close down the Westgate Road postal service processing and distribution center.

The presence of anthrax was announced Thursday night after it was discovered on a shrink-wrapped pallet of stamps in a sample taken by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services.

N.C. officials said the amount discovered is medically insignificant and that it is safe for the postal facility to remain open.

Raiko Hill, a postal clerk at the Westgate facility, said postal officials closed the Accountable Papers Section

of the post office, which is where the anthrax was discovered. She added that decontamination began without shutting down the facility.

But Ajamu Dillahunt, president of Local 1078, said he thinks the anthrax discovery has been handled poorly. "We feel like they should shut the plant down and test other areas," he said.

But N.C. health officials said the presence of anthrax in the postal facility is medically insignificant and has been contained to the region where it was found.

Debbie Crane, spokeswoman for the Department of Health and Human Services, said the plant was not shut down because there is no medical concern.

She said the quantity of anthrax found was very small and was found in a locked vault, adding that people with access to that location would have shown symptoms by now.

But Dillahunt said the contaminated pallet had been moved through areas where more people could have been exposed.

"They should call down the entire operation until they test the entire area," he said. "(Saturday) there was some additional testing done in the pathway of the mail because of pressure. Decontamination of the area has ended, but further test results have not come back yet."

Crane said the U.S. Postal Service is in its second tier of a testing process and that there have been 275 tests along the East Coast. The first tier tested postal

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Avani Shah finishes applying her makeup before her performance at Sangam Nite 2001. Her dance, set to Hindi pop music, was one of many performances that incorporated modern and old-fashioned movements.

Sangam Nite Connects Cultures

More than 100 participants performed in Sangam's 15th annual celebration, which took place Saturday night.

By PHILISSA CRAMER
Staff Writer

Bright costumes, whirling dancers and allusions to India's Bollywood movie industry filled a packed Memorial Hall on Saturday as part of a celebration sponsored by Sangam, the University's South Asian awareness organization.

The 15th annual Sangam Nite, titled "Saathiyon ka Safaar" - a travel with friends - featured performances by 15 varied ensembles interspersed with

comedy skits. More than 100 students took part in the production.

Masters of ceremonies Amisha Raja and Sujay Kansagra announced each act and introduced the "travelers" who represented the night's theme. The travelers, students who participated in multiple skits to create a bridge between them, highlighted some of the differences between South Asian and American culture.

"It was a 'Going to South Asia' version of 'Coming to America,'" said Fauzia Tariq, Sangam's cultural co-chairwoman and co-organizer of Sangam Nite.

But for the most part, Sangam used the night to meld the two cultures, fusing traditional styles with hip-hop music and modern dance.

The Mahatmas dance troupe combined traditional South Asian dance

with break dancing and martial arts moves. And while "Mann ke Manjeere" portrayed the exuberance of women in a customary way, most of the dancers were not South Asian.

Rashmi Bisen, who danced in the fashion shows, said this year's Sangam Nite included more non-South Asian participation than in years past.

"I think it adds a lot," Bisen said. "When non-South Asians don't perform, it is not depicting our daily lives."

Saagar, the graduate student wing of Sangam, offered another example of cultural fusion. Its competitive dance began with two distinct groups of dancers, one dressed in traditional garb and one in modern clothing, and by the end of the

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Staff Cuts Target Filled, Vacant Posts

By BROOK CORWIN
Staff Writer

State budget cuts are forcing UNC-Chapel Hill's nonacademic departments to evaluate the necessity of both vacant and occupied staff positions when making reductions to their operating expenses.

A total of 11 occupied staff positions have been eliminated in the Facilities Services and Academic Technology & Networks departments as a result of budget cuts despite the fact that some positions in these departments are vacant.

In recent weeks, Gov. Mike Easley has ordered that the UNC system revert an additional 2.7 percent of its funding. These cuts have contributed to the need to cut staff positions, officials said.

Provost Robert Shelton said each department can retain its lapsed salary funds - unspent money designated for vacant staff positions - and make cuts in other areas if officials deem the vacant positions crucial to the department's operations. "I decided to give the managers as much flexibility as possible to deal with the cuts," Shelton said. "They have to decide whether it's best in the long run for their department to eliminate an occupied position or a vacant position."

But some department administrators say the possibility of further budget cuts might mean the loss of both lapsed salary funds and occupied positions.

Carolyn Elfland, associate vice chancellor for campus services, said budget cuts already have forced her department to eliminate 21 staff positions, some of which were vacant. But Elfland said she will not hire any new personnel to fill

vacant posts because the General Assembly might reinstate the 2.7 percent temporary cut next year.

"If the revenue from the state is down in January, it's likely they'll ask for more money," she said. "We have been told not to be surprised if they do ask for more. I think this could go on for quite a while."

Bruce Runberg, associate vice chancellor for facilities planning, said his department has permanently cut two vacant positions and will be unable to fill three more open positions if the 2.7 percent cut is permanently enacted.

Shelton said departments can use overhead receipts - money the University receives with research grants that is aimed at offsetting the cost of conducting research - with a large degree of flexibility to cover miscellaneous costs.

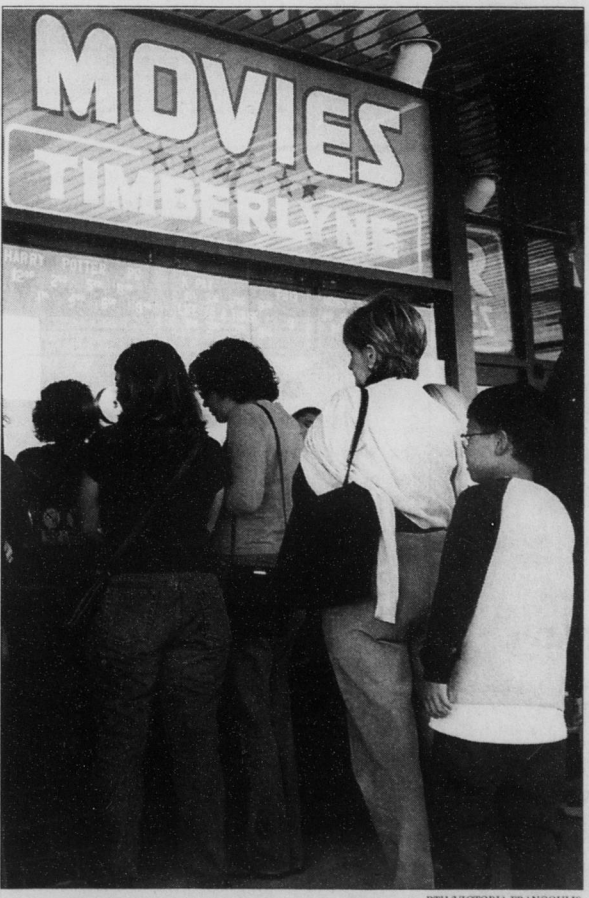
But Shelton said it is unlikely the funds from overhead receipts will be enough to compensate for the budget cuts. "Those are dollars they can use," Shelton said. "But the departments have more demands than dollars."

Some UNC faculty members have expressed interest in forfeiting their \$625 across-the-board salary increases to save staff positions from being cut. Sixty-six faculty members at N.C. Central University have already agreed to give up their salary increases for the same purpose.

Shelton said returned salary money would be given back to the N.C. General Assembly and would not go to funding for staff positions, but UNC-CH Faculty Council Chairwoman Sue Estroff said she is optimistic such a proposal is feasible.

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Residents Eager to See 'Harry Potter'



Harry Potter fans wait in line at the Timberlyne box office Sunday for tickets to the newly released movie. Tickets are sold out until Nov. 25.

Ticket sales are estimated at \$10,000 for the weekend at the Lumina Theatre, says Manager Rachel Stratton.

By JENNIFER JOHNSON
Staff Writer

Local movie theater managers are saying the newly released Harry Potter flick will be the biggest hit since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, signifying a return to normalcy.

"Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," the first highly anticipated film to arrive since Sept. 11, opened Friday and brought in a record-breaking \$93.5 million nationwide this weekend. Local figures were not available Sunday.

The Movies at Timberlyne in Chapel Hill, located in the Timberlyne Shopping Center, braced itself with additional staff and screens for the masses of Harry Potter fans that showed up on opening weekend. "We have two screens running and a full staff. We've been selling advance tickets for a week, and we're sold out until Nov. 25," said Kristen Moos, the manager of Movies at Timberlyne.

Rachel Stratton, an employee at the Lumina Theatre in Southern Village, said the theater began selling tickets for the Friday shows last Monday and sold out Thursday. "I think they're estimating about \$10,000 (in ticket sales) for the entire weekend," Stratton said. "I'm willing to bet this is our biggest ever."

Children buzzing with excitement arrived at the theater with their parents as much as an hour before the show began to get a good seat.

"I've been waiting to see it since last

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