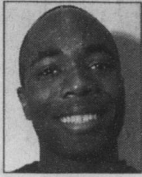


Student Government's Achievements Go Unheeded

It now has been almost two years since a student government leader has stood up publicly to the folks in South Building over a major campus issue.

— Katie Hunter, Editor, The Daily Tar Heel



JUSTIN YOUNG
STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT

Student government has spent the majority of the past year working on being the voice of the student body — your voice. The executive branch and Student Congress work very hard, and on any given day of the week you can read about how we've helped improve campus safety, fought the General Assembly or responded to other campus concerns. You can read about all of this not only in the DTH, but also in the many e-mails we send updating you about how to get involved — e-mails everyone should be reading.

We work very hard to do the best job that we can. We responded to the needs of the campus community in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist

attacks. We have improved the academic discourse on campus — on Tuesday, our Student Academic Advising Board hosted a forum on advising that provided extensive feedback, despite low student attendance. We even helped protect the DTH from the invasion of USA Today and other papers on campus through a readership program that would subject them to unfair competition.

And our resolve to make the student voice heard on the issues of student parking, Qatar and campus-based tuition increases has never been stronger.

The decision to eliminate on-campus resident student parking was handed down by the administration with no respect for student input or feedback from the Transportation and Parking Advisory Committee. Student government officials met with the administration privately to demand that students have an opportunity to voice their concerns — more importantly, we needed the administration to agree

that this item would still be open for discussion.

At the end of last week, we were successful in securing the kind of open debate on these proposals we've been seeking for a month. Now we call on all students to attend the next TPAC meeting on Nov. 28 at 3:30pm. We have parking problems, but we need to collaborate on a better solution than eliminating the few spaces students have on this campus.

On the issue of Qatar, we expressed our frustration with the decision to send faculty, administrators, and other members of the Board of Trustees on a trip to the Middle East without any students! Given the immediacy of the trip, there wasn't time for lawsuits or protests. More importantly, these tactics may win battles, but they often lose wars.

There was an opportunity for calculated negotiations to assure student involvement in decisions from that point forward. Ultimately, the chancellor admitted it was a mistake to exclude student representation from the trip. But private negotiation at the end of last week led to the formation of the Chancellor's Qatar

Focus Group, which will allow a group of 30 students to gather in-depth knowledge about the proposal, present ideas for more ways to enhance the program, and help the chancellor in the decision about whether to establish a campus in Qatar.

More importantly, we have asked that at least a part of this group be asked to explore Qatar when the opportunity for travel to the Middle East presents itself again. We will be accepting applications online for this student seminar until Nov. 28 at <http://www.unc.edu/studentgovt>.

Instead of organizing a large-scale protest on the administration, we were more successful with respectful negotiations. This could not have happened if student government had exhausted its resources on confrontation instead of representation.

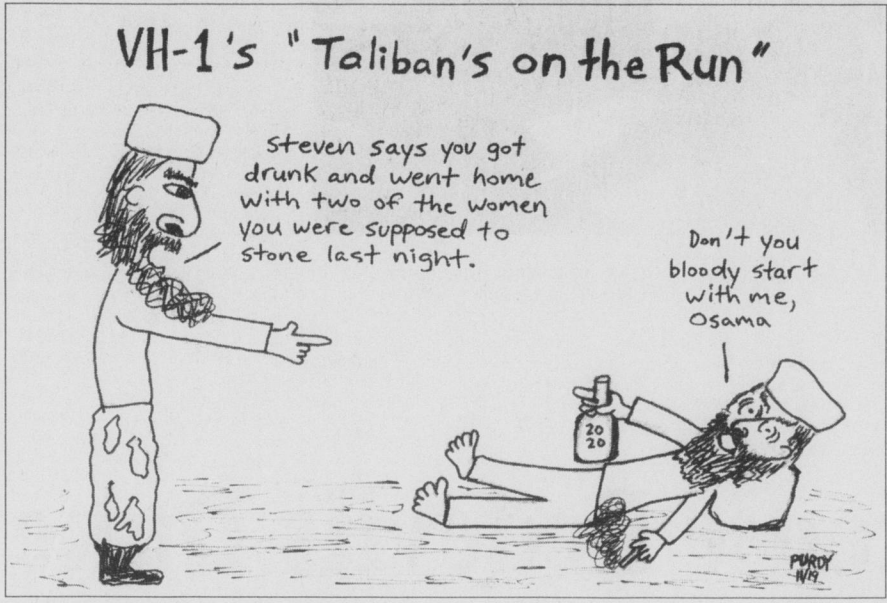
On the issue of campus-based tuition increases, we again preferred negotiation. We were successful with the help of other groups like the Student Advisory Committee to the Chancellor in pushing back the chancellor's

timeline from November to January. During this period, we'll explore if there is a need for an increase and, if so, what option best fits our need. We have publicly taken a stand on the issue by advocating for a tuition guarantee that will make tuition manageable, and students will have direct input through a new tuition committee.

Student government stands up publicly to the folks in South Building on a regular basis; if you doubt this for a second, just ask anyone who works there. We are and continue to be strong advocates for the student body. Don't misinterpret a calculated response for a sedated one. Heavy-handed protests have their season, but level-headed negotiation sometimes have a better eventual outcome.

Not only does that take gumption, Ms. Hunter, but it also takes careful, intelligent leadership, and I commend student government for that.

Justin Young is the student body president. Reach him at jyoung@email.unc.edu.



Masters of War, and Peace As Well

Those who forget history are doomed to repeat it. That is a lesson America's leadership must heed if it ever wants to break the cycle of violence and oppression in Afghanistan.

After weeks of careful deliberation and (mostly) judicious use of force,

America's efforts are coming to fruition. The Taliban's hold on the country is evaporating. The Northern Alliance has already marched into Kabul, and it seems certain that the rest of the nation will soon be in their hands.

Americans are understandably pleased about this turn of events. Even though Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaida leaders remain at large, the thoughts of the Bush administration and its allies are already turning to a post-Taliban government. And it is here that the real work begins.

The last time America's attention was turned toward this particular corner of the world was during the 1980s, when the CIA-backed mujahideen fought a lengthy guerrilla war against the invading Soviet Army. That struggle ended with the ignominious retreat of the Soviets in 1989. Unfortunately, our interest in Afghanistan disappeared with the withdrawal of the Soviets.

By this time, the first President Bush was focused on events in Iran and Iraq. Afghanistan was no longer a major factor in our foreign policy. The



MARK SLAGLE
POINT OF VIEW

Americans left, leaving behind a number of warring factions, trained and armed by the CIA and with no one left to fight but themselves.

What happened next seems all too predictable in retrospect. Feuding warlords spent the next seven years reducing the country to a Stone Age level of existence.

When the Taliban rose to power in 1996, it was actually welcomed by many Afghans as a stabilizing force.

What, if anything, could America have done to prevent this? To begin with, it should have left at least some of its intelligence infrastructure in place.

Instead, all of our assets were removed from the region. Thus, when our attention was forcibly diverted back to Afghanistan, we were obliged to rely on the Pakistani intelligence service, which is notoriously riddled with pro-Taliban sentiment.

We also could have flooded the country with aid to ensure the survival of the social infrastructure. Instead, almost every aspect of civil society has vanished. Public schools have been replaced with religious institutes that teach jihad instead of history.

Now we are once again faced with a changing of the guard in Afghanistan. This time, however, we recognize that the composition of a new government cannot be left solely to whoever has the most guns.

The American government's single greatest achievement of the last century

was the Marshall Plan. By devoting our money and our time to the rebuilding of a demolished continent, we helped democracy flourish in countries desperate to erase the stain of totalitarianism. Now we must do the same in Afghanistan.

To be sure, circumstances are different. There is no foreign occupation force — our military involvement has been limited to bombing sorties and small commando operations. Yet to abdicate our responsibilities on the world stage would only invite further disaster.

President Bush has already stated that U.S. forces will not participate in "nation-building." But even if U.S. troops aren't deployed, America must in some way support the concept of "nation-building."

The most feasible solution is for America to throw its diplomatic weight behind a proposal that would allow U.N. forces from a moderate Muslim nation — Turkey being the most logical candidate — to take care of the actual rebuilding process. America would supply funds, advice and the moral pressure needed to keep the international community's attention focused after the guns are silenced.

America once forgot about Afghanistan, and it in turn spawned a military and political quagmire not seen since Vietnam. Willful indifference breeds nothing but sorrow. We will ignore that lesson at our peril.

Reach Mark Slagle at slagle@email.unc.edu.

Family Values: How Student Parents Are Left High and Dry

With the passage of the bond initiative during last fall's elections, UNC is poised to improve its physical plant in order to maintain its position as one of the country's top research universities. Indisputably, expanded and updated facilities will contribute to the university's productivity, and we are fortunate that North Carolina voters have reaffirmed a commitment to post-secondary education.

MARC DAVID
GUEST COLUMNIST

But the focus on bricks and mortar during the next decade shouldn't obscure the entire range of conditions that allow faculty and students to perform to their highest potential. Indeed, the argument could be made that while the University maintains classrooms, laboratories, and libraries that rank among the nation's best, it settles for mediocrity in terms of the social conditions that are just as critical for sustaining academic excellence.

One such area of underperformance, I submit, is the support offered to student parents.

Though an accurate count doesn't exist, human resources personnel estimate that 2,500 undergraduate, graduate and professional students raise children while attending UNC. Given that most students are under the age of 30, one can assume that a majority of these are raising young children. Services like childcare are essential to their success as students and parents, just as they are for the successful careers of faculty and staff.

Even under the best of circumstances, student parents face serious challenges in trying to balance academics and child-rearing. Like other parents, they must integrate professional and personal responsibilities, devising childcare arrangements that allow them to devote adequate time to study, research and teaching. But students must do so without the paid parental leave or subsidized childcare available to others like them. Many have only their part-time or meager assistant salaries to cover their expenses.

In this regard, Chapel Hill is a difficult setting for students raising children. In Orange County, more than 70 percent of all parents with preschool-aged children work, so demand for childcare is high. Tuition rates are the most expensive in the state, and childcare spaces in facilities are extremely scarce.

Given these conditions, support for student parents seems decidedly inadequate. Consider the following:

UNC childcare serves few students: Last year, only 20 of the 186 childcare spaces at Victory Village and the Graham Research Program were occupied by the children of student parents.

UNC childcare is among the most expensive in Chapel Hill: Victory Village, where children of student parents are

cared for, has some of Chapel Hill's highest tuition rates, with infant care approximately \$1,000 per month.

UNC offers limited childcare subsidy to students: University childcare subsidy served seven student families this past year, and the main financial assistance program budgeted only \$14,700, enough for two students.

Students are ineligible for important sources of public subsidy: Due to strict regulations, almost 60 percent of public childcare subsidy in Orange County, more than 2 million dollars, is off-limits to students.

On average, only three dozen student families access vouchers from sources outside the university. Taken together, these circumstances constitute a kind of structural penalty against students with children. First, they must compete with full-time wage earners in an expensive childcare market, but without the benefit of full-time salaries. Second, they cannot access public subsidy like other families in their income class. Finally, rather than filling these gaps, the university has largely abandoned student families, offering them Chapel Hill's most expensive childcare and little in the way of assistance.

Though the University cannot be expected to provide childcare for all, what care it does offer should be more accessible and affordable to a greater number of student families. A survey of UNC's peer institutions suggests that the University hasn't exhausted all of the possibilities when it comes to funding campus childcare centers and subsidy programs. In the short term, measures that are commonplace elsewhere, like sliding fee scales and the reservation of spaces for students, would help make University-sponsored childcare a more feasible option for student parents.

The allocation of a portion of student fees for childcare subsidy and an increase in the University's subsidy program are more substantial steps which would mitigate against students' exclusion from public subsidies.

Ultimately, the regulations restricting student access to public vouchers should be targeted for reform as well.

As we prepare to renew the University's physical plant, we shouldn't forget that there are also social conditions supporting the high level of performance at major research universities. If UNC is to keep its place among them, those aspects of the campus' environment must be maintained and improved as well.

Marc David is a graduate student in anthropology and a member of UE 150a, the Graduate Employee and Adjunct Faculty Union at UNC. He can be reached at mdavid@email.unc.edu.

Student Congress: A Law Unto Itself?

Last Tuesday night, a coalition of 20 students representing various campus organizations went before Student Congress to ask that a referendum regarding the issue of campaign finance reform be placed on the ballot.

We wanted to give the student body a chance to voice their opinion on an issue that directly affects students;

without meaningful campaign finance laws, our access to lawmakers is severely limited since we are not in the financial position to donate to their campaigns.

Our current political system dictates that money is the way to have one's voice heard. Clearly, student voices fall on deaf ears, as was evident during the recent budget crisis in which our tuition increased yet again while big businesses, which can make large campaign contributions, continue to receive tax breaks.

Our referendum failed to pass Congress by a vote of 9-15. While disappointed with the outcome, I was also deeply disturbed by the manner in which Congress addressed our group. Our proposal was received with mixed response.

Some representatives genuinely wanted to participate in an informed debate about the issue at hand; others seemed to be using any form of rhetoric possible to make sure our group was unsuccessful.

Congress's main opposition to the referendum hinged on the idea that by allowing students to vote on an issue, rather than just Congress, we are taking away their power and authority by circumventing them in the decision process. Some members also feared

they would be setting a "dangerous precedent" if students were actually allowed to voice their opinion.

Had the issue been of a more conservative nature, would the outcome have been different? Would Congress have posed less opposition to our appeal?

I do not wish to make accusations against Congress in general, but

it seems that some members represent only themselves rather than the students who elected them. They seek to advance their own personal agendas by patronizing those who come forward requesting their help. Is this how Congress should act? It is a shame that I feel unwelcome by my own legislature. From now on, I will think twice before coming to them with any of my concerns.

Under the pretense of upholding the Student Code, Congress is able to promote a conservative agenda. For while the request for an additional lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender administrative position was denied on a technicality of the code, the College Republicans easily received their funding request to bring David Horowitz to this campus. There is an obvious correlation between the conservative nature of a proposal and how much support Congress will show for it. Maybe my liberal background has warped my sense of perception, but to me, something about this situation does not seem right. Can it be that even on the campus of UNC, politics are partisan?

There is no reason that it should matter if you are a Democrat or a Republican, a liberal or a conservative, but somehow, it seems to make a difference. Congress still makes decisions

along party lines, even though there are no official "parties" to side with.

I will be the first to admit that I am an idealist. So maybe what I am about to put forward is just another one of my crazy ideas. But think, wouldn't it be amazing if instead of pitting liberals against conservatives, we could simply put aside our political leanings and start working together to affect some change?

The next time I go to Student Congress, I would love to know that maybe what I propose to them would be received objectively, whether it concerns campaign finance reform or David Horowitz. Maybe, just maybe, student groups would feel welcome to approach Congress with their requests, even if they have more than a benign funds appropriations request.

Representatives, are you not students like the rest of us? Just because you hold the title of "District X representative," does this mean you have the right to assert your power and authority over those who come to you for assistance? Were you elected to represent yourself or your constituents? Listen to those who seek out your attention. Examine their proposals objectively and respond in manner that shows consideration for the efforts they have put forth.

The Campaign Finance Reform Coalition has not been silenced by its experience with Congress. We will strive to educate the campus on this issue and show Congress that students do care about meaningful campaign finance reform and are willing to say so.

Frances Ferris is a sophomore international studies major. Reach her at ferris@email.unc.edu.

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